A

TREATISE

OF

Sacramental Covenanting

WITH

CHRIST:

SHEWING

The ungodly their contempt of Christ, in their contempt of the *Sacramental Covenant*.

And calling them (not to a profanation of this holy Ordinance, but) to an understanding, serious, entire Dedication of themselves to God in the *Sacramental Covenant*, and a Believing Commemoration of the Death of Christ.

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THE CONTENTS.

Page.

Chapter I. *The Introduction, lamenting the ignorant vulgars contempt of their Salvation, and shewing the design of this Treatise.* 1

Chap. II. *What it is to do this (to celebrate the Communion) in remembrance of Christ: and* 1. *That it includes the true keowledge of him.* 34

Chap. III. 2. *A right remembring sin; the occasion of his Death. Of Repentanoe, with considerations to work and promote it.* 48

Chap. IV. 3. *A right remembring of the great end of the death of Christ, to redeem us from all iniquity, and sanctifie us. Of Faith and covenanting with Christ.* 76

Chap. V. *Perswasions to accept of the Redeemer, and give up the Soul in Covenant to him.* 96

Chap. VI. 4. *A right remembring the benefits procured by his death.* 1. *Of Justification.* 130

Ch. VII. *The second benefit is Sanctification.* 139

Chap. VIII. *The third benefit is eternal Happness with God.* 151

Chap. IX. 5. *It must be a thankful Remembrance.* 155

Chap.

Pag.

Chap. X. 6. *It must produce an holy Love to Saints.* 158

Chap. XI. Use. *An invitation to come to Christ and his Sacrament, with motives thereto.* 168

Chap. XII. *Sacraments are not to be accounted vain because externals.* 196

Chap. XIII. *Against too seldom communicating in the Sacrament.* 205

Chap. XIV. *The Objection of unfitness answered, as proposed by the doubting and careless.* 209

Chap. XV. Obj. *We are not in perfect charity, but at variance with our neighbours, answered.* 234

Chap. XVI. *Directions for a due preparation and right receiving.* 242

Chap. XVII. *Directions for duty after the Sacrament.* 286

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

The Introduction, lamenting the Ignorant Vulgars contempt of their Salvation, and shewing the design of this Treatise.

THe blessed God, who in these last days hath spoken to us by his Son, and more fully and clearly reveal'd the way to life and immortality, which Christ hath brought to light, hath abundantly manifested his infinite wisdom and goodness, in suiting and accommodating his commands and institutions, to the meanness of our capacities; and, as a God who knows our frame, hath so fitted himself and the revelations of his Will, with a respect to our weakness, that nothing but affected ignorance, and meer wilfulness, can keep out the understanding of what he hath taught us, or hinder the performing of what he commands us.

The Doctrines of the Gospel, which are of necessity to be believed in order to salvation, and upon which an holy life is built, are few and plain, which we may find summ'd up in our Creed. As for the precepts which are given to be the rule of our life, how easie are they to be known and remembred, how exceeding reasonable in themselves, and most agreeable to our rectified Natures, and apparently tending to the unspeakable advantage of particular Persons, Families, Towns, and Common-wealths: the Gospel being design'd, not only to bring men to glory and pleasure hereafter, but to better the world at present, and to make this earth a kind of type and shadow of Heaven; and so it would be, if men were but more generally brought under the Power and influence of the Christian Religion, which doth not only forbid those

ſins which are deſtructive to the happineſs of Societies and ſingle perſons, as the Laws and Religion of the Heathens might alſo do: but ſtrikes at the very heart of wickedneſs, and gives the ſureſt directions and beſt helps, for the utter removal of the cauſe and root of all diſorders in the world, which it would be beſide my purpoſe at preſent to ſpeak of. None have cauſe now to complain, that they know not what to do to obtain eternal life, ſince he that runs may read his duty; To love God above all, and our neighbour as our ſelves, to do as we would be done unto, to repent of all our ſins, and betake our ſelves to the mercies of God through his Son Chriſt Jeſus for a pardon, to be humble, holy, chaſt, and temperate; is any of this difficult to be underſtood? have we not a plain Word, directing us how to lead the whole courſe of our life? and have we not a Monitor within us, the Spirit of God by our Conſciences in moſt caſes, telling us how we ſhould behave our ſelves? The ſum of all is comprehended in our Baptiſmal Covenant, *to renounce the Devil and all his works, the world with its pomp and vanities, the fleſh and the luſts thereof, and to be devoted to the Father, Son, and holy Ghoſt* And as our duty is eaſie to be known, ſo it is not difficult to be done, where there is firſt a willing mind; for indeed in this is comprehended all, to be unfeignedly willing to be ſuch as God would have us, and to do all that he bids us. So that none can excuſe himſelf for his diſobedience, which is nothing elſe but obſtinacy or groſs negligence. And though of our ſelves we are poor weak Creatures, yet through the almighty grace that is offered to our aſſiſtance, we may be enabled to do all things needful for our happineſs; and thoſe weakneſſes that cleave to us, which we allow not our ſelves in, but ſtrive againſt and bewail, we are aſſured through the merits of our precious Saviour, ſhall never be laid to our charge.

And

And as the great truths and duties of our Religion are thus plain and easie, so the positive institutions, whereby I mean the Sacraments of Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, are few and clear; being neither burthensome to be practised, nor the meaning of them hard to be understood. Doth not that form of words, which Christ hath enjoyned to be used in Baptism, whereby we are solemnly received into the number of professed Christians, sufficiently shew the meaning of it? namely, that we are hereby consecrated and given up to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And doth not our being Baptized with Water, very plainly hold forth our washing and cleansing from the stains and pollutions of defiled nature, & from the guilt of sin, by the blood and Spirit of Christ? And who knows not, that the Lords Supper is for remembrance of Jesus Christ that died for us? The breaking of the Bread, and pouring forth of the Wine, how fitly and evidently do they represent to us, that his body was broken, and his blood shed for us? And the Elements of Bread and Wine, which we commonly use to nourish and refresh us, do naturally signifie that strength and comfort which we receive from Christ, as I shall hereafter shew at large.

Since then the truths of our Religion are so evident, the Duties so reasonable and excellent, the Ritual part of the Sacraments, so easie, so few, and so exceeding profitable, may it not well be expected, that all who professs themselves owners of that Religion which Jesus Christ hath taught and established, should be well acquainted with these weighty truths, diligent in the practice of their Duty to their Maker and Saviour, and to one another, and most devout and serious in the observation and use of these holy Sacraments, & constant in their attendance upon all Ordinances, as publick Prayer and Preaching, whereby they may be instructed & enabled to know &

do the will of him that sent them into the world. But alas, alas, to the dishonour of God and our profession, and to the grief of all that long after the advancement of true goodness in the world, by sad experience we find the quite contrary even in this our Nation, that we look no farther. God forbid that I should go about to disparage the glorious fruits of our reformation from Popish Ignorance and Superstition; no, blessed and for ever praised be our God, for that unspeakable mercy to this unworthy Land! for the happy effects whereof, doubtless thousands of Souls are praising him in glory, and thousands more yet on Earth have cause to be infinitly thankful for that clear light which visited this corner of the Earth, when sunk into little less than an *Ægyptian* Darkness: so that I verily believe there is no Nation under the Sun, where there are greater numbers of knowing hearty Christians, who walk agreeable to the Gospel-rule, such that would be owned and approved by Christ himself and his Apostles, were they now amongst us, and will be, at the day of their appearance before him. But having said this to prevent exception and mistake, give me leave to resume my complaint, that still there are so many that are in Darkness in the midst of Light, and that walk *as in darkness, not as children of the light*. Notwithstanding the means of knowledge, multitudes remain in gross ignorance, and are unacquainted even with the great Foundation-truths of the Gospel; and can it then be otherwise, but that they should be vicious, careless, and worldly? And many who have a superficial knowledge of their Duty, and confess its best to be careful in doing of it, yet are themselves wilful and gross neglecters of it, and live in open violation of God's holy Laws. Many there are that can talk religiously, and are ready in the Scripture, that yet will not by any means be brought

to forsake those sins, which they find Gods Word every where condemns, nor will they set themselves to live such an holy serious life, which is again and again so expresly and earnestly urged upon them. As for the Sacraments, though most are careful to bring their Children to be baptized, yet I pray God it be not more out of Custome than Conscience; for some of these can give no tolerable account of the reason of that Ordinance, nor why they would have their Children partake of it, only as they see their Neighbours do, so do they. But yet there are far fewer, who make any Conscience of informing their Children what a strict Covenant they are entred into, how they are related and solemnly engaged to God; for alas, can we expect Parents should teach their Children to walk as becomes those that are in Covenant with God, when they themselves live rather like Rebels to his Majesty than faithful Subjects?

And as for the Lord's Supper (which I intend to make the subject of my following Discourse) how sadly is it neglected in many places; or else rusht upon inconsiderately and carelesly, as if it was but a matter of course, and no such a dangerous thing to receive it unworthily, as Scripture assures us that it is. How many hundreds, yea thousands are there in both City and Country, who make no Conscience at all of coming to the Table of the Lord? perhaps they may come once a year, and scarce that. Nay, many go from one year to another, and never appear there: as if they acknowledg'd not they had a Saviour died for them, or as if he had not bid them thus to remember his Death, or as if his Death were not worth the remembring. Oh careless, stupid sinners, what have you got to take up your thoughts and minds, that Christ himself is thus forgotten by you? You can think well enough of your

Children and Friends, yea, of our Cows and Sheep, and your very Swine, and muſt Chriſt have no room in your thoughts or memory ? Do theſe indeed deſerve more love than he? Have they done more for you, than he hath done ? or can they do more than he is able farther to do, and willing alſo, if your wretched obſtinacy did not prevent him ? I know you can ſay, many of you, that he deſerves not to live, who can forget Chriſt, and that you do indeed remember him, and take him for your only Saviour ; and will pretend that you have God always in your mind, when you are about your work, or upon the way, and you think we muſt take your word for't, becauſe we know not your hearts, and cannot diſprove you ; but if one may judge by your carriage, you manifeſt nothing leſs. If one follow you from morning 'till night, he ſhall ſcarce hear one ſerious word come out of your mouths ; you ſpend not half an hour in a day in Prayer, either with your Families, or alone ; plain enough we can hear you ſwear and curſe, and take God's holy Name in vain, but ſcarce ever ſo much as once to mention him with reverence. Whatever company you light into, you are ſtill talking fooliſhly and vainly, or elſe only of your worldly affairs, but nothing that concerns the Service of God, and the Salvation of your Souls. But for many of you, I need no other evidence againſt you, than your groſs neglect of this Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. If this paper fall into the hands of any ſuch, (and I hope God will direct it into their hands, for it was for ſuch that I did chiefly intend it.) If I ſay, thou who art reading theſe lines, be guilty of neglecting this Ordinance of Chriſt from one year to another, when thou haſt frequent opportunities and invitations to partake of it, let me ask thee how thou haſt the face to ſay thou remembreſt Jeſus Chriſt, when thou wilt not do

ſuch

ſuch a ſmall thing as he enjoyns thee to do in remembrance of him? never taking care to prepare thy ſelf and come to his holy Table. Canſt thou remember him, and yet forget his Command? and abſent thy ſelf from thoſe who meet together to celebrate his remembrance, at any Ordinance appointed by Chriſt himſelf for that very purpoſe? Ah poor Creatures, that you did but well know your ſelves, and your own neceſſities, and concernments, then could you never be ſo unmindful of Jeſus Chriſt; you would as ſoon forget your daily bread. Oh did you well know what he hath done for you, and under what engagements you ſtand to him, you would ſooner forget your deareſt friend, who had ſav'd you from death, and daily fed you, and cloathed you, and kept you alive; for indeed this, and much more than this, do you owe to the Redeemer of Mankind. Oh that you would but believe and conſider, what glorious unſpeakable treaſures of love and goodneſs he hath purchas'd for, and will beſtow upon you, if you will accept them upon his terms, and then you would no more forget him, then you would forget your Prince or Landlord, from whoſe bounty you were in daily expectation of a plentiful eſtate. And if you would but ſee to get your ſelves well informed of the nature of this holy Ordinance, diſtinctly and clearly to apprehend the reaſon and uſe of it, and what priviledges and bleſſings are contained in, repreſented and ſealed by it; I dare ſay you would more long to partake of it, than of the moſt delicious Banquet, or ſumptuous feaſt that ever was prepar'd. But what do I talk of? who can perſwade carnal, ſenſual, ſtupid Creatures, to believe that there is any ſubſtance, any worth in thoſe things that their ſenſes cannot reach to? what care they for that which no way tends to the pampering and pleaſing of their fleſh? Give me leave, before I come to

what I principally design, a little to lay open the wretched carelesness of the generality of men, and briefly hint at the cause; that they may be ashamed of themselves when they see their picture and description, and seek out for the cure of their distempers.

Who would not, by the lives of most, conjecture that they thought themselves sent into the world, on purpose to get food and raiment, and to make provision for the flesh; and that they had reason given them for nothing else, but to be more witty and politick in carrying on their worldly designs? and how well would it be for them at the last, if those souls should have the greatest reward, which were most loving to the body, most solicitous for its welfare, and did toil most in its service: but what an heavy doom will light on them, if they must hereafter fare (as for certain they must) according as they imployed themselves in seeking their own proper happiness, in the pleasing and serving of the great God. Oh the strange folly and bruitishness of these men, who are so forward of themselves, to seek out after any thing which they believe makes for their temporal good; and yet will not by any means be drawn or driven to that, which is indeed for their spiritual and eternal good, yea, and their temporal too, so far as may consist with these. As if when they are contriving and working for the body, then only they were about their own business; but when they are minding the matters of their souls, they were employ'd for some body else, in works that will be of no use or advantage to them; when yet God himself hath told us, that in the matters of Religion, *If we are wise, we are wise for our selves*. But this comes to pass, by reason of that sottishness which inclines poor creatures to judge of all things by their sense, and to measure their goodness by their suitableness to the flesh. This makes the whole

Gospel

Goſpel to be a meer riddle to them, and little more regarded than a ſtrange ſtory; for it treats of ſpiritual inviſible things, wherein immortal Souls are concerned, and they forget that they have ſuch ſouls. To hear of ſpiritual food and raiment, *to put on Chriſt, and to feed upon him*, all which we meet with in the word, are myſteries, of which they are willing to be ignorant. To be *made glad with the light of God's countenance, to have fellowſhip with the Father and the Son, to be beautified, adorned, and enriched with graces and good works*, and the like expreſſions are ſo dark and knotty, that they know not what to make of them: they account nothing beauty but what they can look on; nor bravery, which makes not a noiſe and ſhew in the world: They know no Raiment they need, but what they wear on their backs, nor any food but that which they put into their bellies. That only do they account pleaſure, which they feel in their throats, or which is ſo groſs, that horſes and dogs have a ſhare in it as well as they; and nothing muſt paſs for honour with them, but having reſpect in the world; and that they count their chiefeſt riches, which they put in their purſes, and lay up in their bags. And this ſame blindneſs and carnality, amongſt all other miſchiefs that it does, occaſions the contempt of that ſacred appointment of Chriſt, the commemoration of his death, by partaking of his Supper: for here's nothing provided to give that entertainment to greedy raging Senſualiſts which they covet and hunt after. It is indeed very well worthy our obſervation, that ſo far as our Senſes might be helpful to us in the ſervice of God, he hath graciouſly condeſcended to uſe ſuch means as might work upon and affect them, that thereby Faith it ſelf, our apprehenſion of thoſe things which we ſee not, may be quickned and advanced: which, as in ſome other inſtances,

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ſo in this Sacrament eſpecially is made manifeſt: for here we have a crucified Chriſt plainly held forth to us, and the benefits we receive by him; are ſignified by thoſe material things, Bread and Wine, which we eat and drink. And thus far God hath made proviſion for ſenſe it ſelf, the more to excite and ſtir up our dull ſpirits; but ſo far as the pleaſing and humouring the ſenſes might be an hinderance to the Soul, God hath made no proviſion for them. Here's no ſuch pomp and gaudineſs, and outward ſplendor, as may gratifie wanton carnal minds. Papiſts may deviſe ſuch things (inſtead of Chriſt's Inſtitutions, which they ſteal away from the People) to the quenching of all true zeal and ſpiritual affection in God's ſervice; but the Goſpel warrants not any ſuch hurtful devices, and our Church doth juſtly reject them. Nor is here a feaſt of dainties to ſatisfie a luxurious appetite, or feed an hungry belly. Here's food for the Soul indeed repreſented, and convey'd by theſe Elements to the worthy receiver; but the moſt are ſo ignorant of their greateſt concernments, that they never yet found ſuch a thing within them as a ſpiritual hunger. What, a ſoul be hungry? how can that be? Alas, they have ſo much to do to ſupply the neceſſities of their bodies, that they can't have while to regard their ſouls. No, they may ſink or ſwim, ſtarve and damn for them; for they have other matters to mind which they hold more neceſſary. Is it not a wonder what we read *Matth.* 22. at the beginning, that when the King had made a Marriage for his Son, and prepared a Feaſt, and ſent forth his Servants to invite the Gueſts, they ſhould *make light of it*, and begin to frame excuſes, that they had other buſineſs to do, and this and that way to go, and therefore could not come? What, not come to a feaſt, to a ſumptuous Marriage-feaſt? to a feaſt made for the King's Son?

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And when ſervants were ſent on purpoſe to invite them to it? were not theſe a ſtrange ſort of ſtubborn fooliſh men, that would diſobey their own King, ſending them ſuch a courteous meſſage as this? Reader, doſt thou not condemn them in thy own thoughts? doſt thou not think thou would'ſt never have been ſo ſilly and obſtinate as they, if thou hadſt been ſo ſent unto? But for all thy thoughts, its well if thou prove not guilty of the very ſame fault thy ſelf. For what was the matter think'ſt thou, that theſe people would not come when they were invited? Why alas, there was no ſuch Fare made ready as they had a mind to. Be ſure had there been but ſuch good chear as would have fill'd their bellies, they would have made haſte enough, and would have invented excuſes how to get in, rather than to ſtay away.

But this is a Parable, ſhewing what entertainment the moſt do give to the Goſpel, whereby we are invited not only to a Wedding-Feaſt, but to be even married our ſelves to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the everlaſting Son of the Father: and yet this meſſage, the matchleſs mercy whereof may aſtoniſh Men and Angels, I ſay this Meſſage is ſlighted: *Men will not come to Chriſt that they may have life.* Adulterous Souls go after other Lovers, and will not be eſpouſed to the Lord of glory: *they ſee no form nor comlineſs in him why they ſhould deſire him.* They hear great commendations of him indeed, what an excellent glorious perſon he is, no leſs than the Son of God made man, whoſe love was ſo great to Mankind, that he laid down his life for them, but in the mean time, *What has he?* what's to be got by him? what eſtates will he ſettle on them? what honours will he advance them to? what? why they ſhall through him have their ſins pardoned and ſubdued, their hearts ſanctified, and at length ſhall be

receiv'd

receiv'd into everlasting glory. —Nay, if this be all, they have no mind to come on, but when their consent is desired, they have some excuse or other ready at hand; and either they will not come at all, or else not yet, or not so throughly and heartily as they are commanded, and in such a wilful refusal of Grace do thousands persist and perish. And though I suppose this forementioned Parable doth not directly and primarily belong to the Lord's Supper, yet it may by consequence be very well applied thereto: Since here is a Marriage-feast of the King's Son, here are the great blessings and mercies of the Gospel held forth and offered, and all who come duly prepar'd, and sincerely dispos'd to accept the same, shall be assur'd of them; and hither do God's Ministers exhort all to come in the appointed regular way. And what's the effect of their Message? *why the most make light of it.* Hither to this holy Table are people call'd to give up themselves to God, to testifie the truth of their sorrow for sin, and to renew their resolutions against it, and so to receive a sealed pardon, and a Title to life everlasting; but for their parts they have no such liking to these spiritual good things which are so freely tendered them. The truth is, their sins as yet they are loth to leave; for they see no great hurt in them; nay, they think they find much good at present, and do not use to trouble themselves much with the thoughts of that mischief they may hereafter do them, and therefore they have no such high thoughts of Christ for his being able to mortifie and remove their lusts, and so to save them from the misery these would bring them to: They can very hardly be perswaded, that there is any such excellency in an holy life, that they should so speedily and solemnly resolve upon it. And though they can like well enough to go to Heaven when they must needs

leave

leave this world, yet they look upon that day so far off, that they are in no great haſt of making ſure their future happineſs, but think it may be time enough to do that a great while hence. And can any man wonder, if thoſe who are no more ſenſible of any benefit they have by Chriſt, are very ſlack and negligent in a thankful remembrance of his death, and of thoſe benefits which thereby we enjoy and hope for, which is the great end of celebrating this Sacrament? No marvel if ſuch as theſe always find one excuſe or other, to keep away from that which they have no more love to, and the neceſſity and advantage whereof, they are no more acquainted with. If there was but any matter of gain to be got by it, any thing which made for the fleſh, we ſhould need no ſuch ado to get them thither: We may be ſure, if the King ſhould but proclaim that he would give ſix pence a piece to all the poor throughout *London*, that would repair to *White-Hall*, there would need nothing but the knowledge of it to get them together. O what running, and crowding, & craving would there be! He need not ſend any Meſſengers to beſeech and perſwade them to receive his Charity. But when the Sovereign Majeſty of Heaven and Earth by his Heralds proclaims to all, *Ho every one that is willing, let him prepare himſelf, and come hither to receive an earneſt of infinite and everlaſting treaſures*, there are few will accept the offer, as if it was of no value; and as if the Apoſtle was miſtaken, when he prefers the *blood of Chriſt* before ſuch *corruptible things as ſilver and gold*. Nay, I'le warrant you, in thoſe Pariſhes where you ſhall find ſo few at a Communion, did but any rich man amongſt them make a Feaſt, and invite the whole Town to it, you ſhall find but few ſtay at home. But now when God himſelf calls them to his Table, and there hath provided them food which came from Heaven, true Spi-

ritual

ritual Manna; even the Body and Blood of Christ, which is meat and drink indeed, they find no great appetite to this Banquet. All the great words they hear of it work not with them: for in all such cases 'tis not other mens words and opinions that we judg by, but our own relish and feeling. And whilst men have got such corrupt dispositions, and carnal affections that they favour only those things which are gross and earthly like themselves, what wonder is it if they undervalue that which is so unsuitable to them, and in which they can feel no more taste than in the White of an Egg. A Swine prefers his own swill before the greatest Dainties that can be provided: and a voluptuous sinner that is wallowing in the mud of fleshly pleasures, would not willingly exchange conditions with the Glorious Angels, that alwaies behold the face of God.

Oh whither is the Soul of man degenerated! into what a low and sad estate is it faln, that it finds sweetness in any thing rather than in that which is truly pleasant? How chearfully and contentedly can people set themselves to any thing rather than to that only work which God hath appointed them, even the *working out of their Salvation*? From morning to night they can follow their worldly business without complaining, and yet know not how to spend one day in seven, nor one half hour in a day in the service of God, for the saving of their own Souls. Oh what pains do many poor men take, only to get a livelihood in the world, and yet think everlasting life worth no regard or care at all. They can be content to spend their thoughts, and strength, and time upon vanity, to *lay out their money for that which is not Bread*, and to labour for the wind; but when God saith, but *give me your hearts*, he is denied. If this careless generation had but Houses and

Lands

Lands, Money, and Goods, proffered them on the ſame terms that Heaven is, how greedily would they lay hold on them? If a rich man ſhould ſay to them, *Love but this Gold more than the Dirt under your feet, and you ſhall have it*; O how quickly would they purchaſe it, and never think the condition hard! If the poor man was enjoyned to prefer bread before a ſtone, and to deſire it more, and then it ſhould be given him, do you think he would ever be without it? And yet when the Bleſſed God offers them ten thouſand times greater mercies upon ſuch terms as theſe, they refuſe them, as if they were required to do ſome great thing, for that which was not worth their Labour. What doth God command us, but to love himſelf more than empty creatures? To value an everlaſting Kingdom, before the frail comforts of this ſhort life? and yet we will not do it. He bids us but love our beſt part, even our Souls, more than theſe vile bodies; and to take moſt care for that which deſerves moſt, as being the more excellent. When he enjoyns us to fly from ſin, and embrace holineſs, it is as if he ſhould ſay, *Beware of that which will do you the greateſt miſchief, and cloſe with that which will do you the moſt good*; *Accept of Liberty and Freedom, and do not lie in Priſon and Fetters: Be in Health, and not in Sickneſs*; and yet men will not be perſwaded. When God ſaith, prefer my pleaſant Service, before the Bondage of the Devil, and thou ſhalt be happy for ever; he doth as it were ſay, *Be but heartily willing to accept of happineſs here, and thou ſhalt have it hereafter*; but the moſt are unwilling. And upon this it is, that not only God, but all the world, yea, themſelves, will for ever lay the blame of their deſtruction, *by their reſolvedneſs and wilfulneſs in the wayes of ſin, they are mercileſs murderers of their own Souls.* The Devil may tempt, and the world may allure, but they cannot

not force them to sin. There is not one of all those millions that perish, who can truly say, that he was unfeignedly willing to have sav'd himself, but could not. But as for those that perish from among Christians, they have least of all to plead in their own excuse. For they have been exhorted, and besought again and again, to put away their evil doings, to renounce their lusts, and turn to the good ways of God, and yet they would not hearken. What though the Devil entic'd them to wickedness, did not God's Spirit also move upon their hearts, to have drawn them to holiness? But they who knew not how to *resist the Devil* as they were commanded, could *resist and grieve, and offer despight to the Spirit of Grace*. Whilst they knew not how to reject nor get away from a sinful Companion, they could put off their Ministers and godly Friends with flat denials, if not with contempt and jeers. What though the flesh was craving for forbidden fruit, unlawful pleasures and satisfaction? Yet did not Conscience contradict and check it? Why then should flesh, which had no reason for its desires, be hearkened to and obeyed, whilst Conscience, which is the voice of God, must be slighted and silenced? Tell me, whoever thou art, that makest a Trade of sin, and livest in the neglect of thy Duty to God that made thee, and keeps thee alive, not accounting it the business of thy life to serve and honour him, but goest from one day to another without the serious thoughts of his glorious Majesty, and all his wonderful works and mercies; thou who seest no need of hearing or reading God's Word, of constant Prayer, or receiving Sacraments, that puttest off the thoughts of Death and Judgment, and art careless of making preparations for the same: Tell me I beseech thee, what's the reason of such a wretched, sinful course as this? Is it because thou knowest no better? Wast thou

never

never told how thou oughteſt to behave thy ſelf? Did'ſt thou never hear who it is puts men upon ſin, and what wages they have for it at length? Didſt thou never read nor hear of a Saviour that came to call men to repentance and holineſs, and laid down his life to ſave all that will be his faithful followers and Servants? It's very ſtrange indeed if thou haſt lived in any ſuch dark corner, that thou wert never acquainted with theſe matters; but it is moſt likely thou haſt heard them again and again, but all hath been to no purpoſe. What doſt thou not know who made thee, and why thou waſt made? There's few Children but can anſwer ſuch queſtions as theſe, and yet how few men that conſider them, or that live as if they knew them!

There are indeed many to be found, eſpecially of the meaner ſort, who tell you they cannot read, nor are Book-learned, and therefore they hope God will hold them excuſed and not require much of them, but yet theſe people have learning enough to look to their buſineſs in the world; and if they be ſick, they'l ſeek for help, or if they are wronged they'l look out for relief. And what have they not learning enough to know what they muſt do to be ſaved? have they been idle and unwilling to learn ſo much as to read plain Engliſh; and do they think this will ſerve their turn to plead for their ignorance and neglect of Duty, and wilful Rebellions againſt God? What were they taught or commanded ſuch difficult things, that none but Scholars can underſtand or do them? They can tell, as ſimple as they are, that the light of the Sun is greater than the light of a Candle; that Gold is better than Braſs; that a King is above a Conſtable; that its better to have an eſtate of their own, which they ſhall enjoy as long as they live, than to be Tenants to another, to be turned out when he will. Do they know theſe things, and is it any harder

to know that God who made all things, and put that goodneſs into them which they have, is better than all thoſe things which he made, and therefore ſhould be preferred before all Creatures; That he who is Lord of All, ſhould be obeyed above All; that to be like him, is better than to be like the Beaſts; that a certain everlaſting Glory is more worth than ſhort, uncertain comforts here below? Again, theſe men knew well enough how to eat and drink, and to take heed of what might hurt their bodies; they could avoid the perſons and places that were infected; if the houſe was on fire they would run out of it, and call neighbours to help to quench it; if they are upon the way, and are told of quick-ſands and quagmires, they can avoid them. And yet have they not learning enough to do good to their Souls, and to take heed of that which will deſtroy them for ever, and hearken to others that warn them of their danger? They can be diligent enough to pleaſe thoſe that do them good turns, and to beware of offending ſuch as can undo them. And yet do they account it ſuch an hard matter to love and pleaſe that God who hath given them all the mercies they ever enjoyed, and to take heed of provoking him to anger, *who can kill both body and ſoul, and caſt them into Hell?* Yea, further, let thoſe very people that cannot read, have a Paper given them that tells them, how to cure any diſeaſe they are troubled with, they can go to a Neighbour, and get him to read it to them, and they can mark it ſo diligently as to follow its directions. Or if they be in any trouble about their Eſtates, they can carry their Deeds and Evidences to a Lawyer, and pray him to peruſe them, and tell them how the caſe ſtands with them. And what, could they get no body to read the Bible or ſome good Book to them, that might direct them in the way to Salvation? Or could they not have hearken'd

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carefully to their Miniſter, whilſt he was telling them what they muſt do? or might they not have gone to him in private, and deſired particular inſtructions for their ſouls? Nay, there are few Families of the pooreſt, but one or other amongſt them can read; and might they not have taken ſome ſpare time, and have read together, and diſcourſed one with another about the ſtate of their Souls, and what was to be done in order to everlaſting happineſs. The plain truth is, there are few but can ſhew diligence and skill enough in any worldly trifle, that they think does at all concern them; but (as I hinted before) they are ſo inſenſible of any advantage that's to be got by minding the things of Religion, that they diſregard them as matters of no worth or conſequence. For I cannot imagine whence this ſtrange and damnable careleſneſs ſhould come, but that firſt of all, men forget that they have ſouls which will never die, but muſt live for ever in another world, either in joy or torment, according as they behaved themſelves in this: For certainly, the ſound belief, and frequent ſober conſideration of the true nature of the Soul, is the great foundation and ſupport of ſerioúſneſs in Religion, the great deſign whereof is to help this immortal Soul to an happineſs ſuited to its Nature. Wherefore, if the ſoul it ſelf be forgotten, how can it otherwiſe be but God will be forgotten alſo, and the Duty we owe to him neglected? For though if we were ingenuous, his mercies to our bodies might engage us to love and ſerve him; and the moſt carnal men may ſo far remember God, as to look for health and wealth, and outward comforts from him, yet this cannot bring them to any heartineſs in Religion, which conſiſts very much in denying the fleſh, and thinking meanly of all things here below; and therefore no man can ſerve God as he ought, but he who believes that he rewards his diligent

Servants with an everlasting Happiness in the fruition of himself: for nothing but the hopes of this can bear out men in those difficulties of suffering and obedience which they may be call'd to. But if men have no regard to their Souls, neither will they take any heed to please God, nor make it their business to get to Heaven hereafter, which is nothing else but a state of happiness principally prepared for a reasonable soul in the full enjoyment of God; neither will they take care to prevent their falling into Hell, which is that state of misery whereinto *they that forget God are turned*, and chiefly appointed for the punishment of the Soul. And hence it will unavoidably follow, that they will undervalue the work of redemption, and disregard the Lord Jesus, who wrought this work in behalf of the Sons of men, to recover their Souls to God, to purchase the pardon of sin, and enable them sincerely to please God, so to prevent their damnation, and bring them to eternal glory. And if they have no esteem for Christ, then needs must they slight the Word and Sacraments whereby they should be brought to acquaintance with him, to be interested in, and related to him, and to receive the communications of grace from him.

Now though there are few that will acknowledge themselves guilty of such ignorance of themselves, such contempt of God and Glory, and of Christ, the way thereto, yet their actions do too plainly shew it. For certainly if they had any true knowledge of their own souls, they could not but take more pains to save them than they do, even out of love to themselves; when as now they never in all their lives, many of them, are so much as once brought seriously to ask the question, *how they should do to be saved?* No, nor ever withdrew themselves into private for an hours time on set purpose to consider what their spiritual condition is, and how

they

they ſtand related to God, whether as friends or enemies, and whither they muſt go when they depart out of this life. And tell me then, do theſe people indeed remember to any purpoſe that they have ſouls that muſt either be ſaved or damned for ever? What though they may ſometimes hear Sermons, or read the Bible, yet do they uſe when they come home, or when they have laid aſide their Books, ſoberly to think of what they have read or heard? Do they conſider how it concerns them? Do they examine themſelves by the Word, and apply it home to their own conſciences, and guide their lives by it? Do they regard it as that by which they muſt ſhortly be judged? And though they may ſometimes put up a Prayer to God, yet do they perform this duty as ſeeing any need of it, taking any delight in it, or as expecting any good from it? Do they before-hand think what they ſtand in need of, and ſo pray to God for a ſupply of their wants, not only of their Bodies, but Souls, in as good earneſt as they can ask their neighbour for any thing they lack. And in the very act of praying have they any awe or ſenſe of God upon their Spirits, as they would have, if they were putting up a Petition to a Prince or Judge? And do they mind what they have been about when they come from the Duty? Do they carefully wait for an anſwer of their Prayers, and patiently expect thoſe bleſſings, which they deſired from God, ſuch as ſtrength againſt ſin, and grace to ſerve him? And do they do what is in their Power to procure what they pray for? Thus you may be ſure it would be with them, if they were in good earneſt in their Prayers. For when they go to any great man to requeſt a favour from him, they attend what anſwer he makes, and their thoughts are much upon it, and they are deeply concerned for the ſucceſs of their requeſt. Though they have been baptized into the

Name of Chriſt, yet do they ever uſe to think what they are thereby engaged to, and ſee to anſwer that Engagement? And ſuppoſe they do ſometimes come to the Communion, yet did they ever come to it with ſuch a kind of Spiritual appetite and expectation of ſtrength and benefit, as they go to an ordinary meal? Or are they careful before-hand to fit themſelves for the Duty ſo as to profit by it? Whatever they may pretend, it is moſt manifeſt that Religion is not taken by them, for the great work of their lives. They are far from ſpending their time, and buſying their minds like men that were ſent into the world on purpoſe to ſerve God, which they can ſay is the reaſon why God made them. It is not their chief ſtudy and work ſo to know and pleaſe their Maker, and to get their Peace made with him through the Lord Jeſus, that they may live with him hereafter in Glory for ever. No, no, to the Conſciences of theſe men I dare appeal, this is the leaſt matter of a thouſand with them, and there's ſcarce any thing which they leſs regard. They hear their Miniſter about theſe things, as if he was telling them a ſtory of no concernment, or ſpoke in a ſtrange Language, which they underſtood not. Was he but telling them the way to thrive in the world, and get ſtore of riches, they would hear him more attentively, and remember better what he ſaid to them, and not think they had done enough when they had ſtood in the Church for an hour as now they do. He that hath made any tryal, may eaſily ſee that this ſort of people do not give the ſame heed to one that diſcourſeth to them about the matters of their Souls, as they do to him that ſpeaks of earthly things. If you talk with a Citizen about his Trade, or with a Countrey-man about his Corn, or Cattel, or the Weather, or any the like ſubjects, they can hold diſcourſe with you well enough;

enough; but if you come to ſpeak of the unſeen Kingdome, and the way thereto, what need we have to ſearch into our Souls to ſee that we have got a good ſound Title to that Glory. If you do but tell them of the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of life, exhorting them therefore to get well prepared for Death and Judgment, how ſtrange is ſuch language as this to the ears of many? Some laugh at it as babling, others give you a bare hearing, but are little affected with the weightieſt matters delivered in the moſt piercing words that a man knows how to ſpeak. Nay many times they'l be taken up with other things ſo much, as not to mind or underſtand what is ſaid to them, nor do they afterwards remember it; but are as much moved with the barking of a Dog, or blowing of the Wind, as with the moſt ſerious affectionate Exhortations you can give them. And indeed how can men take any great pleaſure to hear of things that are not in their own Element, but as it were out of their reach? Would not the plain Countreyman be ready to laugh and wonder at a Scholar that ſhould talk to him in Latin, or make him tedious diſcourſes of any point in Philoſophy though he ſpoke in plain Engliſh? What's all this to him? He underſtands it not, or if he did, he may think, what ſhould he be the better for it. And does not the Word of God tell us, that the *natural man receives not the things of the Spirit, but they ſeem fooliſhneſs to him, becauſe they are Spiritually diſcerned* The Doctrine of Regeneration by the Spirit, to thoſe that never felt it, is ſtill as ſtrange as it was to *Nicodemus*. And except we have before-hand got ſome inward apprehenſion of the things that we hear of, all talk of them is but as an empty ſound, that ſignifies nothing. Wherefore no marvel, if they who think ſo ſeldom, and underſtand ſo little of God, and Chriſt, and a work of grace,

to be wrought on their hearts, are no more affected nor ſtirred when they hear of them. And whilſt they perceive no profit they ſhould get by theſe things, what ſhould they hearken to them for? They cannot by all you ſay, get one penny more in their purſe, nor a meals meat, nor a ſuit of cloaths; and theſe are the moſt deſirable enjoyments they are acquainted with. And its no great wonder, when we conſider the education of the common ſort, if they be of ſuch a wretched temper. For perhaps they were born and brought up by parents like themſelves, that knew not how to acquaint them what they were made for, in any ſuch manner as was likely to do them good; and, it may be, never ſo much as ſet them to School, to learn to read Engliſh; and in their childiſh years it cannot be thought they ſhould have much underſtanding in Religion, when they think of little elſe but their meat and play; and when they grow up to riper years, they are ſet to Trades, and to work for their livings: (I ſpeak of the meaner ſort,) and when they come to be ſettled in the world, and have Wife and children, then they have enough to do to provide for their Families; and cannot ſpare time to learn the way to Heaven, and if they live to be aged, they think themſelves too old to learn, and are too deep rooted in their ways to be drawn to forſake them without little leſs than a miracle, and ſo there are multitudes even within the ſound of the Goſpel, that live and die in lamentable ignorance and ſenſeleſneſs. I know all this while in every ſtate and time through which they paſs, the moſt have opportunities for learning their duty, if they had any heart to it: but their minds are ſtill poſſeſſed with ſomething elſe.

And though they may be ſomewhat conſtant in keeping their Church, yet this being a thing they have always been

been wont to, before they knew what they did, they ſtill hold on in a cuſtomary manner, without duly conſidering what they come thither for; not thinking that the Miniſter ſpeaks to them, and about matters that are for life or death: the diſcourſes alſo which they hear being upon particular ſubjects, they are like to profit the leſs by them, in that they have not ſuch a ſound and clear knowledge of the chief points of Religion, as may enable them to underſtand and profit by Sermons. And though from Children they may ſome of them be able to repeat their Creed, and Commandements, and Lord's Prayer, yet truly it is very eaſie to ſay theſe over a thouſand times without being much affected with them, or well underſtanding them, only pattering them over by rote: eſpecially if they never had theſe principles clearly laid open and explained to them. It may be alſo many of theſe never had any particular cloſe counſel given them, tending to awaken them to an apprehenſion of their condition, to convince them of their ſin and miſery by nature, and put them upon ſearching in good earneſt after the way to eſcape damnation, and be truly happy for ever. Or if they have been ſo exhorted, yet they will not be brought to think of theſe things ſoundly by themſelves, and to ſeek God by Prayer for direction and aſſiſtance. It is no eaſie nor trifling matter for a man wholly to change his thoughts, purpoſes, affections, and manner of life, as all muſt do that turn from ſin to true godlineſs. Such a change as this is not likely to be wrought without much conſideration, and ſober ſetled reſolutions on man's part, to which the grace of God would not be wanting to make them effectual. I know it is alſo the grace of God that puts upon them, but yet it is Man himſelf that by the aſſiſtance of this grace muſt thus Conſider, and thus Reſolve. But now when ſhould people ſet upon this work

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of conſidering *what they ſhould do to be ſaved?* Something or other ſtill happens in the way that keeps them from the work, or takes them off before it comes to any good iſſue. Either they are ſleeping or working, eating or drinking, or playing and idling, dreſſing or undreſſing, or have ſome whither to go, or ſome body to ſpeak to, or in ſome company that they cannot leave; or have ſome buſineſs in their heads, which they are contriving, or elſe are in ſickneſs that unfits them for action, or ſome trouble hath befaln them which puts their minds out of order, or ſome happineſs and proſperity which puffs them up with a fooliſh flaſhy joy; or they have ſome brave things in expectation which they are muſing on, and pleaſing themſelves with before-hand. Some ſuch matters as theſe, I dare ſay, fill the heads and hearts of moſt from one years end to another throughout their whole lives. Theſe and ſuch like are the things that come into their minds as ſoon as they are awake, and then preſently they are ſet about one thing or other, or light into ſome company that takes them up for that day, and the like happens to morrow and the next day; and whilſt the preſent time never appears convenient for the ſolemn performance of this great work of Repentance, it is by the moſt poſted off 'till it is too late, and then in vain do they repent to all *Eternity* that ~~they~~ did not repent in *Time*. Now it could not be that they ſhould never have a ſpare day or hour for the conſideration of, and ſetting upon the work they were ſent into the world for, but that they are guided in the courſe of their lives by this practical deep-rooted opinion, that their only buſineſs here, is to make this life as comfortable as they can; and therefore that to get food, and raiment, and riches for themſelves and their children, to enjoy pleaſures, and be well accounted of in the world, are the beſt things which can

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be imagined; whereupon they wholly bend themſelves to the attainment of theſe things; and on they go in a giddy heedleſs manner, never well examining whether this *their way be not their folly*, nor taking much notice what the principles and opinions are, which have the greateſt power upon their lives, and whence their actions flow, which principles may be ſo wrought into their natures, that they ſhall lead and rule them whilſt they are ſecret, and not diſtinctly known and weighed. And indeed this conceit, that the good things of this life are moſt to be ſet by and ſought after, hath its firſt riſe from our corrupted natures, which being fall'n off from God and contrary to him, inclines us to ſeek happineſs any where, rather than in returning to his love. And then in Childhood, and for ſome years after, we have very weak apprehenſions of any thing but what's before us, being wholly rul'd by our ſenſes. And when our miſerable miſtakes have once taken root, and are become natural to us, its one of the hardeſt things in the world to be freed from them: for we are prone to be ſo conceited of our own ways, that we are by no means willing to be contradicted, much leſs to call our ſelves fools for all we have done, and begin the world anew; as if we had never ſet one ſtep forward in the right way. And it muſt needs be the more difficult to convince men of the folly and baſeneſs of ſuch a carnal worldly life, becauſe they obſerve it to be the cuſtom of the moſt about them, high and low, even of ſuch as are counted wiſe and judicious, worſhipful and honourable perſons. And what, may they think, can they be ſo foully miſtaken, who did but follow the courſe which they ſaw ſuch men lead before them? And this indeed is one great cauſe of the miſtakes and deſtruction of men, that when they come into the world, they chuſe rather to follow the examples of their neighbours than

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the rules of right reaſon which they ſhould gather from God's holy Word,& a due examination of things ; and therefore they take to thoſe actions, and that manner of life which they ſee others follow,without well thinking whether they do wiſely or not : juſt as if a man ſhould ſee a company of people upon the way running as for their lives, pretending that they are in purſuit of ſome great matters, and thereupon ſhould preſently ſet in with them, and run along as faſt as they, without farther enquiry what they look for ; till at length when they are all tired, he perceives they had no other deſign but perhaps to catch flies, which when they have, they know not what to do with; or to lay hold on ſome pretty bird which they could not overtake : even thus when a man ſees thoſe about him running and riding, ſtriving and ſweating to get houſes and lands, and all outward enjoyments, he thinks it needleſs to enquire whether theſe things be worthy all their labour ; no, that's taken for granted : for ſure, may he think, theſe men are no fools, but know well enough what they do, and therefore without deliberation upon the matter, he joyns with the reſt in labouring and contriving for theſe worldly things,taking all the pleaſure in them that they will poſſibly yeild. And whatever help is afforded them for the carrying on of this deſign, they will readily and thankfully comply with. If you ſupply them with what they were ſeeking for, they will greedily receive it, or if you will give them ſure directions how to get it, they will hearken to you, and diligently follow your advice. But whatever is preſented , that no way conduceth to theſe their carnal ends, that which makes them no richer nor higher in the world, nor gives their ſenſes any delight, is like to be altogether ſlighted by them. What mean thoughts therefore muſt they needs have of Sermons, Sacraments, and all Spiritual advantages

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which are only means for the getting of an happineſs quite of another nature from that they are ſeeking after?

I hope this large Preface (which indeed I did not deſign) will not be altogether uſeleſs, nor ſeem impertinent; ſince they who ſo little care for hearing or reading God's Word, for Prayer or receiving Sacraments, who are liſtleſs to all duties, and feel no ſweetneſs in them, all ſuch may hence learn what is the root and ground of this diſtemper, what it is that makes them out of taſt with theſe rich and ſavoury proviſions which all healthful Souls do ſo dearly love, even becauſe their ſecret, but moſt powerful, thoughts are, that they have nothing better than their Bodies to provide for; and that to do this is the chiefeſt buſineſs they have, and that nothing is of any great uſe which makes not for this end. But it would be quite otherwiſe with them, if they were indeed clearly convinced, and ſoundly perſwaded that they have ſouls which will never die, and that theſe are the beſt part, and deſerve moſt care, and are as much to be preferred before the body as a man before the horſe which he rides on; and that theſe their immortal ſouls can only be made happy by the favour of God, out of which they are fallen by ſinning againſt him, and that the great work of this life is to get all breaches made up betwixt God and them, that ſo when they leave this world, they may be reſtored to perfect happineſs in the enjoyment of God; and that they can no way be thus reconciled to God but by Jeſus Chriſt, by whoſe merits and mediation their ſins may be pardoned, and by whoſe holy Spirit (which is given by the Father through him) they can only be ſo changed and ſanctified, that they may be made *meet for the inheritance of the Saints* in the heavenly light of God's preſence and love. Was the ſound believe of theſe plain, great, and commonly

commonly acknowledged truths, but well rooted in the hearts of men, so as to overpower and change their affections, we should soon perceive them to be other kind of persons in all their behaviour. If they took it for the business of their lives to *work out their Salvation*, being convinced that they had nothing in the world to do but this, and what is in order to it, then would they diligently labour after a saving knowledge of a crucified Christ, which comprehends in it the whole of Religion. And then they would highly prize and diligently attend upon those means which Christ hath appointed for the manifesting himself, and conveying his saving benefits to the soul. They would take care to be found in those ways wherein Christ is like to be found. Whatever had relation to him would be very much esteemed by them; and they would never be at quiet 'till they had done their best to make it sure that they had got an interest in him, and through him a title to the Fathers everlasting love. They would then rightly inform themselves what's required of all that must be saved by Christ, and these conditions they would endeavour to come up to, and perform. They would be willing to enter into the most solemn Covenant with him, to take him for their Saviour in all his Offices, by him to be brought to that glory which God hath prepared for true Believers: and the keeping of this Covenant would be their study and care through the whole course of their life. Now though considering these things, it might appear a very fit method for the curing of mens mistakes, and direct them in the way to blessedness, first to represent and demonstrate to them that they have immortal Souls; and that the love of God is their only portion, and that this can no way be obtained but by the Lord Jesus, and then to shew what is required to make us partakers of happiness by him; yet since these

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things are in ſome ſort known, and readily confeſt by the moſt, I ſhall at preſent wave this method, and chuſe rather to drive at the laſt of theſe, which will be found to contain all; namely to direct and exhort them to enter into Covenant, and make a thorough cloſure with Jeſus Chriſt, that through him their ſins may be ſubdued and pardoned, their perſons and natures reconcil'd to God, that they may be bleſſed for ever in communion with him. And even this is my chief deſign in laying down the following Directions to a due preparation for, and a right receiving of the Lord's Supper, and in giving Motives to the ſerious and frequent performance of that Duty, which I look upon principally as a ſolemnizing and ratifying our Covenant with God by Jeſus Chriſt; and the ſincerity of the heart in making this Covenant, and our faithfulneſs in keeping it, is the very heart and ſcope of Chriſtianity. For my intention in treating of this Subject, is not meerly to perſwade people to come to the Lord's Table (alas what a poor thing is that to be reſted in!) but to inſtruct them for a right coming to, and hearty receiving of Chriſt himſelf, then to come to the Sacrament, there to make and renew their Covenant with him in a more formal and expreſs manner, the more to affect, and deeplier to engage themſelves. For this being a ſenſible and ſolemn thing, will be apt to make the ſtronger impreſſion upon mens ſpirits,; and perhaps they will be ſooner perſwaded to this work, becauſe it is ſo much fitted to ſenſe it ſelf. But the great danger is, leaſt they ſhould ruſh upon that which they underſtand not the reaſon of, and think they have done enough by bare receiving the Sacrament, without conſidering to what purpoſe they do it; which would be great madneſs, and of worſe conſequence, than for a man to run and lay his hands upon the book, and kiſs

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it, and uſe the like ceremonies of an Oath, and never mind what he ſwears to, nor afterwards think what he hath done, though it was about a matter of life and death. And therefore I ſhall endeavour by God's aſſiſtance to prevent this miſcarriage, by ſhewing what is the nature and deſign of this Ordinance, in a right participation whereof conſiſts ſo much of Religion: ſince hereby a man profeſſeth and engageth himſelf to be a ſincere obedient Chriſtian, which may be underſtood by this compariſon before I come to ſpeak to it more fully, that the more ignorant Reader may the ſooner have the notion fixt on his mind. It is much what, as if the Governour of a City, after there had been a ſeditious inſurrection of the Citizens, ſhould offer pardon to all that would acknowledge their fault, beg his pardon, and return to their former ſubjection and peaceable behaviour; and moreover ſhould enjoyn all that were thus affected, to come take a piece of money which he would give abroad, or to partake of a feaſt which he would make on purpoſe for the entertainment of ſuch; now would it not be madneſs, and groſs impudence, and diſſembling, for any to receive this money, or go ſit at this Table, who were reſolved yet to continue their rebellion, and would imploy that very money, and the ſtrength they received from his meat, againſt him that gave them; whenas hereby they were to teſtifie their reſolutions to be faithful and obedient? Even thus hath it pleaſed the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Redeemer of rebellious degenerate mankind, to proclaim free and full pardon to all that will heartily repent of, and turn from their wicked ways, and take him for their Lord and Saviour, and ſubmit to his directions for their attainment of happineſs; and withall he hath commanded all that will thus become his diſciples firſt to be liſted under him by Baptiſm, whereby they

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are visibly entred amongst the number of professing Christians, and afterwards they who were baptized in infancy are come to this Sacramental Feast, and there to joyn with their fellow-believers, in a personal profession of their willingness and resolution to stand to that Covenant, whereinto they were engaged by Baptism, in testimony whereof, they eat the Bread, and drink the Wine, whereby the Body & Blood of Christ is represented, as I shall further shew anon. Now would it not in like manner, be a strange piece of folly and monstrous hypocrisy, for any man to rest satisfied with his having been baptized, or his receiving the Lord's Supper, and think himself therefore a Christian good enough, without taking care to perform those promises which he then made, but rather encourage himself in sin by the consideration of what he hath done, as if he might the more safely rebel against God, because he had expressly vowed against all such rebellion? Could there be a more desperate, dangerous wickedness than to make such a wilful mistake? And yet I wish there be not thousands guilty of it. Alas, alas! how few that have taken the earnest-peny, and wear Christ's Colours, that ever think to any purpose what they are hereby bound to? How many in effect renounce their Baptism by their ungodly lives: and either neglect the Lord's Supper, or come to it to pacifie their Consciences, that they may sin the more freely, rather than to strengthen and engage themselves against every sin? As for Baptism, I shall not insist on it, though I grant that this is the leading Sacrament appointed for the testimony of our first being devoted to God, which engagement we ought to call to remembrance, and renew at the Lord's Supper, whereof according to my promise I now come to speak.

CHAP. II.

What it is to do this (to celebrate the Communion) in remembrance of Christ. And

I. *That it includes the true knowledge of him.*

BEing desirous to contribute some assistance to those that need it, to bring them (through God's blessing) to a conscientious performance of this great duty, I observe there are two sorts of persons faulty herein; either such as neglect it, or that miscarry and fail in the manner of doing it. Those that neglect it are either such that do it out of meer wilfulness, as the grosly vicious, that will not come to this Sacrament, because they think this would lay an obligation upon them to forsake those sins which they never intend to part with, whatever comes on't; and the stupid senseless ones, that know not the worth, nor see the need of this Ordinance, or any other duties of Religion, who live as heathenishly, as if they had never heard of God and Christ, and another world, nor do they care to be instructed in these points, as if they were not at all concerned in them; or else they are such that abstain from it out of doubting and fear, not thinking themselves worthy, or not knowing whether they are worthy or not. Of this sort there are many good Christians, who too much indulge their own melancholly and despondent apprehensions, and also many weaker, but, I hope honest well-meaning people, who seem to have a great esteem for this Sacrament: but having always heard what a dangerous thing it is to receive it unworthily, dare not venture upon it, not being well acquainted with the nature and reason of it, and being doubtful whether they are fit to come or not, being also, I fear,

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too languid and heartleſs in deſiring after it, or in making preparation for it, and for ſuch as theſe principally do I intend my Directions. By thoſe that are guilty of miſcarriage in the doing of this duty, I mean ſuch as ruſh upon it ignorantly and raſhly, not well weighing what they do, and who, notwithſtanding their cuſtomary attendance at the Lord's Table, continue their old ſinful courſe of life. Theſe alſo, I hope, may receive ſome benefit from the following Diſcourſe, together with the moſt profane and ignorant, whilſt I ſhall endeavour plainly to ſhew the intention of this Sacrament, and perſwade them to attend thereupon in a regular manner. For ſince, in behalf of thoſe for whom eſpecially I write this, my great buſineſs is to ſhew who it is that is worthy to partake of this Ordinance, and wherein this worthineſs doth conſiſt; the method I will take ſhall be this, namely, to ſhew for what purpoſe it was appointed by Jeſus Chriſt, and thence to diſcover thoſe Qualifications and Graces which are required in the Communicants, that they may receive it aright to thoſe purpoſes for which it was appointed: and after I have done this, I ſhall lay down ſome arguments or motives to quicken all to come to, and celebrate it in this due manner, and then briefly direct thoſe that intend to come.

As to the firſt, what was the reaſon and end why this Sacrament was appointed; I know not whence we ſhould be better informed, than by looking back to the time of its firſt appointment, and to ſee what Chriſt tells us he did ordain it for, and this we may find expreſly ſet down, *Luke* 22. 19. When he had broke the Bread, and diſtributed, he adds, *This do in remembrance of me.* And the ſame words he uſed alſo after the delivery of the Wine, as appears by the Apoſtle S. *Paul's* relation, *who delivered unto them what he had received of*

the Lord, 1 *Cor.* 11.24. 25. Where after the giving of the Cup, 's added, *This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me*; and so again, *ver.* 26. saith the Apostle, *As often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lord's death 'till he come*, that is, you publish and represent it to the world, you acknowledge and commemorate it. So that by this it is plain, that the great end of this Sacrament, to which all others may be reduced, is, *that by the celebrating thereof we may remember Jesus Christ, and especially that we may keep up the memory of that inestimable mercy to mankind, his dying for us*; a mercy which *should* never be fogotten by those on earth, and *shall* never be forgotten by those in heaven. Now hence it follows, that they who are in a capacity and fitness rightly to remember Christ and his Death, are worthy to partake of this Sacrament which was set apart for that purpose: wherefore without going any farther I shall shew what is necessarily required to, contained in, or immediately flows from this remembrance of Christ, that so we may the more distinctly apprehend what is required of us to make us worthy Receivers: And herein, I suppose, will be found comprized those several graces usually laid down for the due qualification of Communicants, as Knowledge, Repentance, Faith, New obedience, Brotherly Love and Thankfulness. And as I go along, I intreat thee, Reader, seriously to look into thy own heart, and examine thy self whether thou findest in thee these qualifications or not; whether thou findest those graces wrought in thy heart, which may enable thee so to remember thy Redeemer, as may be acceptable to him, that so if thou findest thy self such a one as is described, thou maist give God the praise, and take to thy self the comfort of so great a mercy, and be encouraged to proceed in this and all other holy duties; but if thou findest the contrary, that thou maist

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with all ſpeed and earneſtneſs ſee to get thy heart changed, and thy wants ſupplied. And to this end (ſince I intend no other Application) I ſhall under every Head endeavour to help thee in thy enquiry into the ſtate of thy ſoul, and in thy ſeeking after thoſe Graces which thou maiſt be convinced thou art deſtitute of, and haſt hitherto been content without them; and in this part I ſhall be larger, as taking it to be moſt neceſſary, though having ſo large a field before me, I ſhall labour to confine my ſelf.

1. Firſt then, in order to a right remembrance of Jeſus Chriſt, there is neceſſarily ſuppoſed *a knowledge of him*: for our memory contains only thoſe perſons or things which we before have known. How could he keep the *Fifth of November*, as a Thankſgiving for our deliverance from the Popiſh Powder-Plot, who hath not ſome knowledge beforehand, that ſuch a Plot there was laid by the *Papiſts*, and that by divine providence we were delivered from it? No more can any man remember Chriſt as he ought at the Sacrament, except he knows who this Chriſt is in his Perſon, and Natures, and what his Offices are, what he came into the world for, what he hath done, and will do for us. And indeed this right knowledg of Chriſt neceſſarily requires & contains a knowledge of all the chief points of Religion, of which I hope thou art not ignorant who owneſt the name of a Chriſtian. It's a ſhame for thee if thou art, having ſuch means and opportunities to inform thy ſelf, as thou enjoyeſt: having liberty to read thy Bible, plain Catechiſmes, and other good Books, and to hear God's Word publickly preach'd. Notwithſtanding all which advantages, I doubt there are many to be found, who are very dark, even in the firſt principles of Chriſtianity, as not accounting it any part of their buſineſs to trouble their heads with ſuch matters. And that

which a man makes no great reckoning of, nor thinks himself much concerned in, though he may hear it an hundred times over, he'l scarce have so clear an insight into it, as he that hath heard it but once or twice with diligence and attention, applying his mind to it, as to a matter that is for his life. He that hears a Physician directing him to a Medicine that will recover him from some desperate disease, is far likelier (if he have the use of his reason) to take notice of, and fix into his mind what's told him, than another that sits by, who holds himself nothing concerned in it. So surely if people thought it any great matter to save their souls for ever, they would soon see to get acquainted with the way to Salvation, and not remain in such brutish ignorance as multitudes do. And for the help of such I shall run over those Heads of Religion, which more especially are required to enable us aright to remember Christ at this Commemoration-Feast, which he hath established in his Church. Know then that God at first made man in an happy estate, even *Adam* and *Eve* our first Parents, who if they had continued happy, so should, 'tis probable, we their posterity have been too; but the condition of their continuing in that estate, being perfect obedience to all God's commands, they fell from it by breaking a particular Command, eating of the fruit of a certain Tree in the garden of *Eden*, whereof God hath enjoyned them not to eat, even of the *Tree of knowledg of good and evil*, as you may read at large, *Gen.* 3. Thus their hearts were turned off from God, and fixt upon the Creature, which was pleasing to their senses. Hereupon they became liable to the wrath of God, who had before threatned, that *in the day they eat thereof they shall dye the death*, which included in it all kind of misery, whatever it should please God to inflict. They being thus become sinners, they

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begat Children like themſelves, *conceived in ſin, and brought forth in iniquity*; for *who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?* and beſide that corruption of nature which did cleave to their Children, the guilt of their ſin might alſo in ſome ſort moſt juſtly be imputed to them, they being as common perſons, repreſenting all mankind, who fell with them when they fell. But their Children, as they grew up, became guilty of actual ſins in their own perſons, to which their wicked natures did incline them, which did more expoſe them to the wrath of God. This condition was the world brought into by ſin, become ignorant of God, prone to all wickedneſs, and deſerving the greateſt miſery, even everlaſting torment, and in this eſtate God might juſtly have left us, he might have *given us up to our own hearts luſts*, and ſo one by one as we came into the world, & rebell'd againſt him, might have deſtroy'd us for ever without any remedy. Yet he did not thus, but was pleaſed out of his own infinite wiſdom to provide for us a Saviour, when we had thus undone, but could not help our ſelves. And who was this Saviour, but his own eternal only begotten Son, very God of very God, who in fulneſs of time became man, and by the power of the Holy Ghoſt was conceived in the womb of the Virgin *Mary*, and born of her without the leaſt ſtain of ſin, and was God and Man in a wonderful manner united in one perſon. This was that Jeſus Chriſt, of whom we read in the Goſpel, who after he had ſome time preach'd his Goſpel to the *Jews*, laid down his life as a Sacrifice to make ſatisfaction for the ſins of the world, and roſe again on the third day, and after forty dayes continuance on earth, he aſcended into heaven, and there is exalted to ſit at the right hand of God in that humane nature which he aſſumed, and there he *lives for ever to make interceſſion for us*, that the benefits he hath pur-

chaſt may be given out to the Sons of men. And theſe benefits are ſuch, that ſhew him to be a perfect Saviour every way fitted to our neceſſities. For by his undertaking this work of our Redemption, he did as it were reprieve the world, and kept us from being ſuddenly deſtroyed by divine juſtice, which otherwiſe would have laid hold on us, and did obtain for us that we ſhould be tried once again for our lives, ſo that our firſt Fall ſhould not be our damnation, if we would accept of the way of Salvation which he had procured for, and revealed to us. Now ſince our firſt happineſs did conſiſt in our being like to God, being righteous and holy and obedient to him, that it might appear that Chriſt conſulted for his Fathers honour, as well as our intereſt; the way to ſalvation which he appointed was this, That we ſhould love God above all, and count it our greateſt happineſs to be reconcil'd to him, that we ſhould humbly acknowledge and repent of all our ſins, of nature and practice, whereby we had provoked his anger againſt us, and be ſincerely willing to live in obedience to his Laws, and that we ſhould own him the Lord Jeſus as our only Redeemer, and depend upon him only for ability to perform theſe conditions, and to obtain the pardon of ſin and the favour of God upon performance of them. And then that we might have this ability, who by the fall were become weak and unable for good, but ſtrongly bent to evil; Chriſt by his death obtained of the Father, that the holy Ghoſt the third perſon of the Trinity, ſhould be employ'd to bring men to the performance of thoſe conditions which Chriſt required of all whom he would ſave: And accordingly the Holy Ghoſt, in purſuance of this work, did inſpire the Apoſtles & their followers to write and preach the Goſpel, and ſealed to the truth of it with miracles, for the conviction of all that ſhould hear it.

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And in some places in all ages hath enabled men to make it known. And moreover this Holy Spirit doth accompany the Word to the hearts of the Hearers, and where he is received, doth enlighten the mind, and soften the heart, and heal, and change, and sanctifie the nature of man, and restores him to the image of his Maker, and begets in him a strong love to God, and a willingness to please him in all things, and brings him to an hearty sorrow for, and an hatred of all his sins, and inclines and enables him to come to Christ, to believe in him, to love and higly to esteem him for this work of Redemption which he hath wrought, ascribing it wholly to his merit that he hath hopes of mercy from God, and any power to please him. And then for all those who by this assistance of the Spirit are made willing thus to come to Christ, and to God by him, for these Christ hath purchas'd, that their sins should be forgiven them, and greater measures of the Spirit bestowed on them; in a word, that they should have all things good for them here, and be received into everlasting glory hereafter. But all they who reject these offers of sanctification and salvation, shall die in their sins, and be everlastingly in torments with the Devil and his Angels. And this same Jesus Christ will be the judge of all men, and at the end of the world shall come with great glory and power, and raise up the bodies of all that were dead, and change those that are alive, and shall pronounce and cause to be executed the sentence of absolution and glorification upon the righteous, and the sentence of condemnation upon the wicked. This is that Jesus the Redeemer of the fal'n world, whose memory ought to be so precious to you. And these were the weighty causes, and the glorious effects of that death which you shew forth, and keep up the remembrance of, in celebrating the Sacrament. I suppose it

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needleſs to turn you to the particular Texts of Scripture proving theſe things, they being ſo common and well known; and the truth of them ſo plain, that they cannot well be doubted of by any that own the Chriſtian Religion. And I hope they are neither ſo many, nor ſo difficult, that you ſhould pretend you want time, or learning, or wit to get well acquainted with them. I dare ſay you could learn other kind of matters then theſe, if you could get any worldly advantage by it. If Books were Printed that ſhould teach you how to be rich and honourable, to live in eaſe and pleaſure, to enjoy health, long life, and all kind of proſperity, you would pore ſufficiently upon ſuch Books, and beat your brains day and night, but you would get to underſtand and remember them. But if indeed you have ſo little regard to your ſouls, that you will periſh for lack of knowing thoſe things which might eaſily be known, your damnation is juſt. And as for you that think the moſt ſottiſh ignorance is excuſable, becauſe you are no Scholars, and yet take your ſelves for as good Chriſtians as the beſt, let me tell you plainly, if you be without the knowledge of theſe principle heads of Religion, you are not fit to be ſo much as call'd Chriſtians. Are you Diſciples of Chriſt that are ſo blockiſh and ſtupid, that you have not yet learnt the firſt Principles, which he teacheth his Scholars? Nay if you refuſe to learn them, you thereby renounce Jeſus Chriſt, to wit, as he is your Prophet and Teacher; which if you do, expect not ſalvation from him. And, as without being acquainted with theſe fundamental truths, you are able to perform no duty aright; ſo eſpecially not this of receiving the Lords Supper; for, I ſay, can he remember Chriſt as he ſhould, that knows not who he is, what he has done for him, or what need he ſtands of him? And they who being in this wilful blindneſs, venture upon this Ordinance, muſt

must needs do it to their own hurt, coming to it as a common meal, or meerly for custom and fashion sake; and so are guilty of the very same miscarriage which the Apostle represents as so dangerous, *1 Cor.* 11. 29. *They eat the Bread, and drink the Wine, not discerning the Lord's Body*, not having that knowledge of Christ, who is there represented, whereby they might be enabled to give him that reverence and honour, which is required of all that are admitted to these mysteries.

I need not sure spend time in examining the Reader whether he know these truths before laid down, or not. If thou hast the use of thy reason, thou canst tell I hope, what it is thou knowest, and what thou do'st not; wherefore take thy self to task, and go over the several points of Religion, as I have before briefly mentioned them, if thou thinkest fit, and take account of thy own apprehension and understanding, and where thou findest thou art most wanting, be diligent to inform and satisfie thy self, and to this purpose make conscience of hearing the word preach'd, and of reading the holy Scriptures in private. And get well acquainted with the grounds of Religion, as you may find them in Catechismes, or the plainest Books that treat of them. But think it not enough to be able to say the bare words, to repeat your Creed without book, or the like, but labour well to understand them, and fix them deeply upon your minds, as those things which are of greatest necessity to be known and remembred of any in the world. But yet barely to know and remember them, will not profit you, except you so digest and improve them, that they move your affections, and guide you in your conversation. It's a most lamentable mistake to think, that the meer saying of what you believe, and what you are to do, will save your souls: as if there was some strange force in the very words, which would make them useful to all that

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should patter them over: for by this means a *Par*
might pass for a good Christian. If you had a Rece
given you, directing you how to cure the Tooth-a
do you think it would take away the pain to get
without book, and say it over by rote? would you n
rather see to read it, and make use of the medici
which it should appoint? even thus must you re
God's word, and good Books, to know what is your d
ty, that you may set with all your might to the doing
it. And indeed your knowledge is defective 'till it co
thus to affect your heart: wherefore let that be the ma
by which you may judge of its truth and sincerity, if
raise your affections, and leads you forth to actio
1 *Joh.* 2. 3, 4. For if you know that God hath in himse
all fulness and goodness, & know that you are needy a
indigent, and can only receive supply and satisfactio
from him, you cannot but desire after him, and se
how to get a part in his love. If you know that you a
in your selves lost undon Creatures, and that Jes
Christ, and he alone, is able and willing also to recov
and save you, you will then betake your selves to hi
for healing and saving mercy. If you know that sin
your disease, bondage, and dishonour, and holiness yo
glory, liberty, and health, you will readily comply wi
the Spirit of God to be freed from sin, and to be ma
as holy as your nature is capable. This then is true a
saving knowledge, which must be in all that can affect
onately remember Christ at the Communion. Of th
knowledge Christ speaks, *Joh.* 17. 3. *This is life eter
nal to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Chri
whom thou hast sent.* And of this the Prophet speaks, *Is.*
53. 11. *By his knowledg shall my righteous servant justif
many*, that is, he shall justifie those who have such
sound and working knowledge of him as leads them t
the performance of what he requires of them. For

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men once come indeed to know that Christ is the Son of God, who earnestly desires their good, and enjoynes them nothing but what makes thereto, surely they will readily then hearken to and obey him. All this I adde to *knowledge*, because it is very imperfect 'till it become thus fruitful; and will not vindicate those in whom it is, from the imputation of ignorance.

Now to get your knowledge to be thus powerful upon your hearts and lives, I cannot advise you to any more necessary course then these two, 1. *Humbly to beg of God to work the truth with power upon your souls*, that you may *receive it in the love thereof*. When you go to hear, or sit down to read, beseech God to accompany the Word by his mighty Spirit, that it may sink into your minds, and not become unprofitable; but that it may enlighten and awaken you, and reach to the very inwards of your Souls, and give you such insight into your selves, and such a discovery of your duty, that you may vigorously be carried on to the performance of it. And then 2. *You must often consider of those truths that you know*; you must dwell upon them in your minds 'till you are moulded, changed, and wrought upon by them. For want of this consideration chiefly it is, that so many remain in ignorance; and that many others, who have some slight knowledge, are no more bettered by it: for you must meditate upon what you read or hear, that you may more clearly and distinctly understand it, which you cannot do, if words slip out of your thoughts assoon as they are out of your ears. And then, after the doctrines of the Gospel are well understood, you must farther consider wherein they concern your particular case, and what use you are to make of them; for otherwise how is it possible they should profit you? Though you have never so much Book-learning, and Brain-knowledge, what are you the better for all, if you im-

prove it not to your own good, by this serious conside
ration? Can you think ever to have a profitable savin
knowledge of Christ, if you use not seriously to think o
him, what need you stand in of him, and what benefit h
will be to you, and what must be done to make hi
yours? Can you get your sins mortified and pardone
if you will not so much as bethink your self what an e
vil thing sin is, and what your particular sins are? Ca
you be moved with the hopes of glory, if you have i
not in your thoughts? Can you escape your danger, i
you forget it, and so are out of fear? If then you woul
ever have any profit by your knowledge, follow the A
postles advice to *Timothy*, 2 Tim. 2.7. *Consider what I
said* to thee at any time, and that's the next way to ob
tain from the Lord *understanding in all things*; so like
wise, 1 *Tim.*4.15. *Meditate on these things, give thy sel
wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all.* If yo
have not time to spare purposely for meditation, ye
take time as you are upon the way, or about any busi
ness which will permit you. And let this be the chie
subject of your thoughts, which I am sure deserve
them most, even *how you should do to obtain salvation b
Jesus Christ*; and never leave following on this enquiry
till you be fully resolved, to set about what's require
of you to that purpose.

As there must be this sound knowledge of Christ, an
of the chief points of Christian Religion in all that ca
duly remember Christ at the Sacrament, so it will be
readily granted, that this Jesus Christ must be believe
to be indeed the Saviour of the World, as is declared i
the Scriptures: and all that is there laid down of his In
carnation, Life, Death, Resurrection, Ascension, Inter
cession, and coming again to Judgment, must be belie
ved to be true. I will not make a distinct Head of this
because its necessarily supposed in the former, as I have

explained

explained it; for our knowledge of these truths is never like to be effectual with us, if we are not first of all perswaded that they are truths. And the Reader might be offended, if I should make any question, whether he believes the Christian Religion, and takes Scripture to be the Word of God, and acknowledges that Christ is the Son of God, and the promised Messiah, of whom the Prophets all along in the old Testament foretold. But though there are few who openly deny, or seem to doubt of these things, yet I fear there is a great defect, and too common even in this part of Faith, which consists in an assent to the truth of the Gospel. For many there are who take little pains to settle their belief upon sure foundations, which would bear a shaking, if any assault should be made; and can give little reason why they are of this Religion or Opinion rather than any other, except because this is that they learnt of their Parents, and is profest by their neighbours, and set up and countenanced by the Laws of the Land; and surely these are but weak arguments. But here let me add as before, that granting you do believe all that the Gospel reveals, yet this is not enough except your belief prevail with you to do what the Gospel requires in order to your Salvation. And this is indeed the surest way to get your Faith well strengthned and confirmed, even by yeilding obedience to the truth, and trying by your own experience, what benefit comes by conforming your selves to the will of God revealed in his Gospel, whether you can find the promises made to such obedient ones in any measure fulfilled to you; and when you have found this, you will say with the Apostle, *You are not asham'd of the Gospel of Christ, because you have* begun *to find it to be the power of God to salvation.* Our Lord himself tells us, *Joh. 7. 17. That if any man will do his will, he shall know of his doctrine, whether it be of*

God

God or not. This is like a man's tasting of Honey, which will give him more assurance of its sweetness than all arguments could do; and this will make him confidently to affirm it, though the cunning'st Sophister should endeavour by subtle arguments to perswade him to the contrary; his experience will confute them all. This is the reason why great Wits & profound Scholars sometimes turn Atheists and Infidels, whilst the honest weak Christian, that hath relisht and well digested the truth of Religion, holds them so firmly in his heart, rather than brain, that he can die for that which he cannot so well dispute for. Thus far then I hope you see its manifest that to your right remembrance of Christ, & so to make you worthy communicants, its necessary that you know who this Christ is, and what you have to do with him and to believe that he is indeed the Redeemer of mankind, and that all that Scripture speaks of him is true.

CHAP. III.

II. *A right remembring sin, the occasion of his death. Of Repentance, with consideration to work and promote it.*

IT may as easily be understood, that if at the Sacrament you keep up a remembrance of Christ, and in an especial manner, *shew forth his death 'till he come*, then you must needs remember what was the occasion of his dying, and that was the sins of the world. Had there been no sin, we had needed no Saviour. Had we continued in our first estate, we had needed no Restorer. Now hence it will naturally follow, that no man can duly celebrate the Sacrament, *whose eyes have not been opened to see the exceeding great evil that is in sin, and to be convinced of his own sins, so as to lament and hate, and resolve*

resolve against them. For is it possible for that man to remember Christ's Death as he ought, that sees no hurt in that which put him to death? Nay, that loves the very Nails and Spear that were thrust into his hands and feet, and sides, and intends to *crucifie him afresh*, when he is gone away? And all this doth he that never yet saw the odiousness of Sin, and that is not heartily set against it, but secretly retains and cherishes it. Can he rightly remember Christs death, who sees no great need he stood in of it, nor is sensible of any great advantage that comes to him by it, but rather thinks Christ might have kept his blood to himself, and it would be a disadvantage to him to attain the ends and benefits of his bloodshed? And such wretched blasphemous thoughts in effect hath he that sees not his sad estate by reason of Sin, and that thinks it would be to his loss to part with it. Wherefore since it evidently appears that true Repentance is so absolutely necessary to qualifie and fit a man for this Ordinance, where it is to be renewed, and to which he must come with an humble broken heart, let me desire thee to put the question to thy own heart, whether thou know'st by experience, what it is to repent of, and be truly humbled for Sin? And that thou may'st the better know what I mean, let me ask thee, Didst thou ever yet seriously consider what thy condition is by nature, and by reason of thy careless sinful life? And hast thou found thy self sensibly affected and stirred with this consideration, so that thou hast been verily perswaded, that thou art in thy self a lost creature, and except there be a way for mercy, art like to perish for ever? And hast thou been convinced that Sin is the cause of all this misery and danger which thou art liable to? And hast thou hereupon heartily griev'd for, and bewail'd thy wretched miserable state? Hast thou been humbled for the Sin thou broughtst into

the world with thee, and for all the sins which thou know'st by thy self, and canst remember thou hast at any time committed? Hast thou been careful to search into thy heart, and to look back upon thy life past, that thou might'st find out what thy particular sins are, that thou maist confess them before God, and forsake them? And hast thou indeed been so sensible of the evil of Sin, chiefly as it is rebellion against that God who made thee, and hath sent his Son to Redeem, and Spirit to Sanctifie thee, and hath daily given thee so many mercies to engage thee to please him? hast thou, I say, seen so much vileness and baseness in thy dishonouring and Provoking so good a God, that this consideration hath melted and broke thy heart, and wrought thee into a bitter hatred and loathing of every known sin, so that thou hast earnestly desired to be delivered from it, which is so odious in its self, and so mischievous to thee? And hast thou been therefore deliberately resolved, by the help of God, without any more delay, to put away far from thee whatever is displeasing to God, and to return to him from whom thou hast faln, and to an obedience to those Laws which thou hast violated and contemned? Examine thy self faithfully, whether thou hast ever experienced such a change of thy mind as this I have described, which may well be call'd *Repentance unto life*. Or rather on the other hand, dost thou not find that thou art such a one still as ever thou wast; as earthly and carnal as ever, as hard-hearted and stupid, and as mad of Sin as ever, and know'st not what it means to have thy heart broken for thy offences committed against the great God of Heaven and Earth? Nay, it may be thou prid'st thy self in being of the very same mind and disposition that thou art now, ever since thou canst remember. Thou art one that hast always lov'd God, and believed in Christ, and bore a good conscience towards

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all men, and then I fear all's little better than ſtark naught with thee: for though there may be multitudes of good people in times of light, and having good education, that cannot diſtinctly tell, when they were in a more eſpecial manner wrought upon, and brought home to God; yet few, if any, but can remember that once they were much worſe than they are; even that they were too like the reſt of the world, but now they find they are waſhed and cleanſed: Perhaps when thou haſt ſworn, or been drunk, or committed any the like wickedneſs, thou could'ſt cry, *God forgive me*, and ſay thou art a great ſinner, but ſtill goeſt on, and remaineſt as bad as thou waſt. If this indeed be thy caſe, if thou art yet a meer ſtranger to this work of Chriſt upon thy ſoul, who is *exalted* in the firſt place *to give repentance*, thou art at preſent very unfit to drink of that Blood which was ſhed for, and which ſeals the *Remiſſion of ſins*.

Now (that I may proceed in the method I promiſed, by directing to the attainment of thoſe graces which are wanting) in order to the breaking of thy hard heart, and humbling thy ſoul for Sin, I might adviſe thee in the firſt place to look back into thy heart and life, to find out thy particular ſins, not being content in the general to confeſs thy ſelf a ſinner, as all men are: for this is not ſo likely much to work upon thee, but to faſten upon thy moſt remarkable ſins, and dwell upon and bewail them, and ſo all leſſer evils, and that *body of death* which thou carrieſt about thee continually, which was born with thee. In this method partly may you find *David's* confeſſion, *Pſal.* 51. at the beginning to the 5. *verſ.* Further I might direct thee earneſtly to beg of God to open thy eyes, and ſhew thee what thy eſtate is, and diſcover to thee more of the evil of Sin, before thou feel its ſad

effects when repentance will come too late. Moreover thou art to uſe all other means appointed for the working of a true and ſaving ſorrow for ſin, as to obſerve what God ſpeaks againſt it in his Word, and to attend diligently to the moſt ſearching and awakening Preaching; and to be much employ'd in thoſe conſiderations that have a ſpecial tendency to the begetting of this frame; and of this ſort I might name ſeveral, as for inſtance, to think frequently how great and gracious a God ſin is committed againſt, and what particular reaſons thou haſt to ſerve and pleaſe him, from the mercies and means thou enjoyeſt; think how he ſtands related to thee as thy Creator, Preſerver, and Ruler, and therefore diſobedience to him is moſt odious, impudent, and undutiful. Withall it's good to conſider how much hurt Sin doth to the Soul, which is ſo excellent a Being, how it defiles, debaſeth, and diſquiets it, how it expoſeth the whole man to all kind of evils and ſufferings here on earth, and to everlaſting torments hereafter, and deprives men of thoſe unſpeakable joys, which are to be had with and from God. But to avoid tedioufneſs, I ſhall paſs over theſe and many the like conſiderations, and keeping to the Subject in hand, ſhall rather direct thee to fetch matter for humiliation and repentance from the Croſs of Chriſt, the remembrance whereof at the Sacrament ſhould ſtill keep up and renew thy godly ſorrow. If then thou art one who never yet ſaweſt any great hurt in Sin, but for all the ill language which is given it, canſt quietly and lovingly entertain it, let me beſeech thee a while to fix thy thoughts upon a crucified Saviour, and then remain of this wretched opinion if thou canſt. Behold the Son of God become man; a moſt innocent holy perſon, whoſe whole life was ſpent in doing good, who heal'd Diſeaſes, caſt out Devils, pitied all that were afflicted, taught

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the ignorant, pray'd and wept for poor Sinners; after all, behold this bleſſed Jeſus, who had never in all his life been guilty of the leaſt ſin in thought, word, or deed, nor ever gave juſt cauſe of offence to any man living, behold him I ſay, in the Garden a little before his crucifying, ſorrowful even to the death, in ſuch a bitter agony that he ſweat as 'twere great drops or clots of blood; & what inward pains and ſorrows doſt thou think muſt thoſe needs be, which put him into ſuch an unnatural ſweat as this, though his patience was as much greater than any mortal mans, as his ſufferings themſelves were, for we cannot imagine that he who ſo calmly bore all thoſe indignities and cruelties which were offered and inflicted by inſolent men, ſhould be leſs patient in regard of thoſe ſufferings which he underwent immediately from God, but we may conclude that theſe were infinitely the greater. Then after this beginning of ſorrows, and after he had been moſt vilely abuſed and ſet at naught by the Rulers, the chief Prieſts, the Souldiers, and common people; after he had in a jeer been cloathed in a purple Robe, with a Crown of Thorns on his Head, and a Reed in his Hand; after he had been laught at, ſpit on, whipt and buffeted, behold him brought forth to be ſtretcht upon the Croſs, where his enemies ſtood gazing, ſhouting, and wagging their heads at him; whilſt his tender hands and feet are ſtruck through with nails that faſten him to the wood, and in his Soul he felt that pain which wrung from him that doleful complaint, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Now let me beg thee to dwell a while upon this Subject with the reaſon and bowels of a man, and then tell me whether in thy Conſcience thou think'ſt it was for a ſmall matter that the Lord of Glory underwent ſuch grievous ſufferings. What? was Chriſt ſo prodigal of his Blood as to ſhed it for a trifle? or was God ſo cruel as to

put his own dearly beloved Son to all this ſmart for an inconſiderable thing? Certainly if thou art a Chriſtian, thou canſt not harbour any ſuch baſe thoughts. Well then, what was it that put Chriſt to all this ſorrow, and ſhame, and ſmart? Ah friend, it was thy ſin and mine, and the reſt of the worlds that was the cauſe, and canſt thou then imagine it an harmleſs thing? If thou doubt of what I ſay, hear the plain Word of God, *Iſa.* 53. 4, 5, 6. *Surely he hath born our griefs, and carried our ſorrows; yet we did eſteem him ſtricken, ſmitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities, the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him, & with his ſtripes we are healed. All we like ſheep have gone aſtray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.* 1 *Pet.* 2. 21. *Chriſt alſo ſuffered for us.* ver. 24. *Who his own ſelf bare our ſins in his own body on the tree* —— Gal. 3. 13. And at the inſtitution of his Supper he acquaints us that his *blood was ſhed for the remiſſion of ſins*, Mat. 26. 28. When Man had rebell'd againſt his Maker, and broke that Law which threatned deſtruction to him that ſhould break it, there was no other way that we are told of, but either he himſelf muſt undergoe the puniſhment he had deſerved, or ſome one elſe on his behalf. And therefore Man being ſpared, there was found no way for the ſatisfaction and honour of offended Juſtice, but by theſe ſufferings which the Lord Jeſus our Surety underwent: who being ſo glorious a perſon, even the Son of God made man, he only *being made a Sacrifice for ſin could condemn ſin in the fleſh*, diſcovering to all the world that ſin was a moſt hainous evil, ſo hateful and diſpleaſing to the bleſſed Maieſty, than he would not forgive to any man the leaſt iniquity without ſatisfaction made, and no other ſatisfaction would he accept but the Death of Chriſt, *who is become our propitiation,*

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and hath made an attonement for us. And can there be possibly imagined any argument of greater weight to bring all considerative persons to detest and forsake that which hath been found so mischievous? and give me leave to improve this consideration in two or three particulars, that so it may be the clearlier discerned, and the force of it more felt.

1. Methinks it may be great matter of humiliation *to us, to think that we should be so hainously guilty in departing from God, and living in rebellion against him, that we could not by any means avoid his deserved wrath, but by these bitter sufferings of the Lord Jesus.* Certainly, Reader, hadst thou been present when Christ was so abused by the cruel Jews & their Rulers, it would have mov'd thee to compassion, if thou had'st only thought him innocent. But if moreover, thou had'st known he endured all that for thy sake, would it not have affected thee much more? If thou had'st seen him spit upon, mock't and stricken with the palms of their hands, if thou had'st beheld the blood running down when he was scourged, or heard his groanings in the Garden, or upon the Cross, and then had'st thought within thy self, *all this is for my sake, this have I been the cause of*, would it not have moved and melted thy heart? If thou should'st now see any of thy friends put to cruel tortures to free thee from them, would it not make thy heart even bleed within thee? And why then may it not have the same effect upon thee, to set a dying Christ before thy eyes, who as *he became poor for our sakes, that we through his poverty might be made rich*, 2 Cor. 8. 9. *so he was chastised that we might have peace, received stripes that we might have healing*, as in that forequoted 53. of *Isaiah*. But yet I remember what our blessed Lord, when he was going to suffer, said to the women that followed him weeping, *Luke*. 23. 28. *Daughters of Jerusalem weep not*

for me, but for your ſelves and your Children; ſo ſay I, poor Sinners, weep not for Chriſt out of a kind of pity to him, that he ſhould unjuſtly (as to men) be put to ſo great ſmart, but weep for your ſelves and your ſins that were the cauſe. And this is that I chiefly intend under this Head, that ſeeing Chriſt hath bore ſuch an heavy Load upon *thy* account, amongſt the reſt, thou maiſt hence learn the true nature and deſert of ſin, of thy *own* ſins which thou art wont to make ſo light of. Certainly the very torments of the damned do not more plainly diſcover the evil of ſin, and Gods hatred of it, than the ſufferings of Chriſt do. For it is evident, that the greatneſs of the puniſhment, where the Judge is knowing and upright, is a plain Argument of the greatneſs of the offence; if you ſhould ſee a man by the way hung up alive in Chains, you would ſoon conclude it was for murther, or ſome the moſt horrid wickedneſs, that he was ſo dealt with. And as evident it is, that the worth and eminency of the perſon who is puniſht ſpeaks the offence proportionably of an higher nature. If we ſhould hear that a King, who is both juſt and merciful, had cauſed his own Son's right hand to be cut off, we might well conclude there was ſome more than ordinary cauſe; but eſpecially if he, being guiltleſs himſelf, had ſuffered this for another mans ſake, we ſhould reaſonably infer, that it was a crime of the higheſt nature, for which was made ſo dear ſatisfaction. Now what muſt we think when we ſee the Lord Jeſus upon the Croſs, who though he felt pain and ſorrow only as he was in our nature, yet was that nature ſo nearly united to the Divine, that it's ſaid, *God purchaſed his Church with his own blood*, Acts 20.28. ſo 1 Joh. 3.16. *Hereby perceive we the love of God, becauſe he laid down his life for us*, that is, Chriſt who was God as well as Man laid, *&c.* The like, to mention no more, we find *Phil.* 2. 6, 7, 8.

6, 7, 8. If then we consider one so far advanced above men, laid so low; one *holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from Sinners*, suffering such grievous things, may we not in all reason conclude, that the sin which caused this was out of measure *sinful*, for that's the worst word that can be given it; its nature being so odious that nothing can be said of it sufficient to express its vileness. Good Reader then let me perswade thee to judge of sin by this evidence, and never more to hearken to thy own Flesh, or to the subtle Temper, or thy foolish Companions, that would make thee believe there's no such hurt in those sins that please thee, that thou need'st not be so careful to avoid them, or so deeply humbled for them. That Devil who would perswade thee that it is such a matter of nothing to provoke God to anger, knows and feels the contrary in himself. So much hurt as there is in a Devil compared to an Angel, in Hell compared to Heaven, so much hurt he hath learnt there is in sin. Beware, lest thou come to learn it by such sad experience thy self. But that I may finish this, let me once again ask thee, whether thou dar'st say, that Christ underwent greater sufferings than he needed to have done, in order to make satisfaction for our sins, or that God laid on him more than in justice he ought, when he was become our Surety? If thou dar'st not affirm either of these, beware how thou mincest and lessenest thy sins when thou should'st repent of, and bewail them: for by so doing thou dost in effect thus blaspheme God. Oh then let sin be call'd to the barr; indict it for a Murtherer, as well thou mayst, accuse it as guilty of the bloody death of the Lord of Life, shew all the Wounds and Stabs that it gave him; and see that thou pronounce sentence against it, even utter death without any pity or remorse; and heartily lament thy own baseness, in having so long given loving entertainment

to

to such a monstrous murtherer and traytor. And whe
ever thou find'st any favourable thoughts of sin arisin
in thy breast, call to mind what it did against Christ, an
let that make thy heart rise against it, and even bo
with an holy hatred and desire of revenge. And let th
frequent remembrance of those streams of blood whic
thy sins fetcht from him, open thy eyes to shed stream
of tears; or however work thy heart to an unfeigne
sorrow for all thy iniquities, for which thy Saviou
was thus wounded.

2. The next thing I would have thee to enlarg
thy meditations upon in the sufferings of Christ, i
order to the bringing of thee to a kindly repentance
is *that unspeakable love which is hereby manifested t
the lost sons of men*: when I speak of Repentance, I mea
not meerly thy shedding of a few tears, but an inwar
change of thy mind, as I before shewed, that thou
should'st turn from Sin to the love of God; and I know
not what can be more likely to produce this, than to
shew thee the intollerable evil and mischief of Sin, tha
thou may'st turn from it, and the infinite goodness o
God, that thou mai'st be drawn to him. Both these the
Cross of Christ most admirably holds forth; so that well
might the Apostle call *Christ crucified, the wisdom o
God, and the power of God*, 1 Cor. 1. 23, 24. How it
shews the evil of sin to bring us to loath and leave it, I
have already shewn, and shall do more in two follow-
ing particulars. That which I would now set thy
thoughts upon, is, the inconceivable love of God in gi-
ving Christ for us, and of Christ in being willing to lay
down his life, *that as many as believe in him might not
perish, but have everlasting life*. Consider seriously how
the great God hath sent after thee a poor worm, the
God whom thou had'st sinn'd against, makes thee offers
of peace, the God who needs thee not, yet appears de-
sirous

rous of thy happineſs; when he might have poured ut everlaſting wrath upon thee, he was willing to ſhew is compaſſion. And ſee what he hath done in order to y recovery. He hath Sent his own Son, *made of a wo-an, made under the Law*, and *delivered him to death r our offences*, and accepted of the ſatisfaction he ath made on the behalf of all, that ſhall by him come that God from whom they are faln: and by his death ot only pardon of Sin, and deliverance from Hell; but glorious Kingdom that ſhall never fade, is purchaſt or all true Believers. So that here,

1. *Thou ſeeſt plainly there is hope of pardon and accep-ance upon thy hearty ſorrow for, & reſolutions againſt ſin.* nd whom would not this encourage to come in freely cknowledging & proteſting againſt their former back-iding and rebellions. If indeed thou waſt paſt hope, were as good keep thy ſins while thou may'ſt, and ake thy beſt of them. But this is not yet thy caſe; and it hereafter ſhould be, thou may'ſt thank thy own wilfulneſs. For Jeſus Chriſt hath *brought in a better hope:* here is by him liberty proclaim'd to the captive, free-om to all that are bound, eaſe and reſt to all that are urdened, a pardon to all that are penitent. And what? will not this make thee ſtir? Is a golden Scepter eld forth, and wilt not thou lay hold of the oppor-unity? Is God willing to put up all the affronts he ath received from thee, if thou wilt now come and ſub-mit thy ſelf, and will not this bring thee in? Is he eady to be reconcil'd, and art thou backward? what; doſt thou rather hold off, becauſe he doth ſo invite nd importune thee to him? Becauſe he is pleaſed with ſo much earneſtneſs and compaſſion to call thee off from ſin to himſelf, doſt thou the more ſecurely run on in wickedneſs? Oh baſe ingratitude, and meer mad-neſs! Becauſe there is hope of pardon diſcovered by

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the Gospel, as procured by Christ, therefore even there-
fore, do wretched sinners harden their hearts, and em-
bolden themselves to continue at a distance from God,
as if it was a matter of nothing to get their peace made
with him, or as if he must of necessity pardon and save
them, let them live as they list. Thus vilely do they
pervert the very design of the Gospel. Whereas were
they ingenuous and reasonable, they would acknow-
ledge it to be a most forcible motive and engagement
to cast away sin, to hear that there was hopes of having
forgiveness and favour from God. If a company of
Subjects should rebel against their Prince, what course
would be more effectual in all probability to reclaim
them, than to assure pardon to all that would throw
down their Arms? But if they should be so base as to
abuse the mercy of their Prince, and think, because he
was so compassionate, they might the safelier persist in
their rebellion, it is but just they should be destroyed.
If thou love thy Soul, then beware how thou abusest the
Grace of God. *Wilt thou put away from thee the evil*
of thy doings, wash thee and make thee clean, and turn
with humility and submission flye to God for mercy:
if so, this mercy through Christ shall be assuredly thine.
But otherwise, know there is not a word of comfort for
thee in the whole Gospel, nothing but what may strike
thee with terrour. For remember well, that the death
of Christ gives all the encouragement in the world to
Repentance, but not the least to *Sin*. Yea, it hath
done more to destroy sin, than all the terrours and
threatnings of the Law. Well then, though thou art a
lost sinner, departed from God, once without hope, yet
behold the God of heaven and earth takes pity on thee:
he would not have thee utterly perish, though thou hast
done so much to destroy thy self. He calls thee back to
him, if thou wilt hearken and obey, and humble thy
self

ſelf before him for thy departure from him, and for all the diſhonour done to his holy Name, and wilt now at length devote thy ſelf to his fear, thou need'ſt not doubt of his favour. So then here's hopes of mercy that may encourage all that hear it to Repentance.

2. And in the next place *there is ſo much love and goodneſs manifeſted in that way whereby this mercy is procured and tendered*, that may ſerve to work upon the hearts of all but flat Infidels, or brutiſh Sinners that will not be brought ſo much as once to conſider of it, or ſeriouſly regard it. Here is love that paſſeth the full comprehenſion of Men or Angels. Here are myſteries and unſearchable treaſures of goodneſs. Wherein could God commend his love more to the faln World, than in giving his Son to die for us when we were without help? And what greater love can be ſhewn, than that which Chriſt hath manifeſted in laying down his life for his friends? nay for enemies, that they might be made friends; for the ungodly that he might reconcile them to God. Vile wretches that we are, no more to be affected with this amazing diſcovery of divine bounty! It's true indeed, there are many things we are yet ignorant of, which makes this love the leſs apprehended in in its due dimenſions. Did we know more the infinite Majeſty of God, and our meanneſs compared to him, and how provoking a thing Sin is, and how contrary to his nature; did we know more what ſtrange condeſcenſion there was in God's *manifeſting himſelf in fleſh*, what bitter things our bleſſed Saviour endured for our ſakes; did we know the greatneſs of that miſery he hath ſaved Believers from, and of the glory he hath prepar'd for them? did we clearly know theſe and all other heightning circumſtances, our admiration and aſtoniſhment would be unexpreſſible, as it will be when they are more fully reveal'd to us. But though at preſent we

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are much in the dark, yet ſo much of them we kno
that would we duly ponder them, we ſhould even
mazed cry out, *oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom*
goodneſs of God! And what? will not this prevail w
thee, oh back-ſliding ſinner, to deal ingenuouſly a
dutifully with that God, who hath revealed ſuch abu
dant mercies to win thee to himſelf? when thou ha
undone thy ſelf, and the Law, which thou hadſt brok
had paſt his ſentence upon thee, when thou mighte
juſtly have expected the execution, behold, without th
ſeeking, a gracious reprieve. And more than ſo, wh
thou might'ſt have had a Purſuivant ſpeedily diſpatc
to hurry thee to deſerved torment, behold a Saviour i
terpoſing to prevent thy ruine. Inſtead of an unchang
able doom, behold an Act of Oblivion, aſſuring pard
upon eaſie conditions. Do but deliberately weig
theſe things with that ſerioufneſs which becomes
man, and ſee if there be nothing in them that may pe
ſwade thee to a ſound repentance for ſin, and a ſpeed
return to the God of love. What doſt thou think,
thou waſt a mean Tenant, and hadſt wilfully, in ſom
diſcontented fit, pluckt down the Houſe thou liv'ſt in,
ſo waſt in danger to lie in the open fields, and to be ſ
verely puniſht as thou hadſt deſerved; what now if a
ter all this, thy Landlord, pitying the miſery thou had
brought thy ſelf to, ſhould courteouſly come to thee
and offer to build up thy Houſe again in a more ſumptu
ous manner then ever, and ſet it at a lower Rent, on
ly requiring thee to confeſs thy former folly, and pro
miſe to be ſo guilty no more, but to live in this thy new
built Houſe, and do thy beſt to keep it in repair, an
to accept of his help for what thou could'ſt not do th
ſelf; and ſuppoſe he ſhould even impoveriſh his ow
children through this courteſie to thee, what doſt tho
think thou ſhould'ſt now do in this caſe? is it any har

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matter to determine? would'ſt thou not think he deſerved to be taken for a mad-man that ſhould ſtand juſtifying his former offence, and would not thankfully accept theſe courteous offers? I dare ſay, Reader, if this was thy caſe, thou art not ſo fooliſh or ſtubborn, but thou would'ſt quickly reſolve what to do, and this mercy and bounty of thy Landlord would even win thy heart for ever, and thou would'ſt think thou could'ſt never be ſufficiently thankful for his kindneſs, nor do enough to make him amends. And would indeed the gentleneſs and liberality of a man, thy fellow-creature, thus affect thee, and ſhall not the loving-kindneſs of God, which hath appeared in Jeſus Chriſt, have much more power upon thee? Doſt thou not believe that our God hath done as much to engage his creatures to himſelf as this comes to? Hath not he ſhewn as much pity and tenderneſs to the ſouls of men, as that would be to the body? If thou doubt it, look back upon the ſtate of man, and conſider Gods gracious dealings with him. Did not he by his own folly and diſobedience caſt himſelf out of Paradiſe, and by wilful ſin deface, and even deſtroy the workmanſhip of God? And yet did not God take pity on us *in our blood, when we were caſt forth to the loathing of our perſons?* Did not he contrive the way for our reconciliation to himſelf, and beſeech us to accept of it? And do we not read, that in order to our *enriching*, the Son of God did as it were *impoveriſh* himſelf, and that *we might be fill'd with the fullneſs of God, emptied himſelf, and became of no reputation.* And what an heart muſt that Prodigal Son have, who will not be affected with the kindneſs of his Father, who takes care for, and ſeeks after him, when he had fooliſhly forſaken his Family, and done what he could to put himſelf out of his Fathers care; and is courteouſly entreated to return back to that comfortable

ſtate

ſtate and relation whence he had baniſht himſelf, and upon condition of his return, ſees another better eſtate provided for him, inſtead of that he hath waſted; and finds his arms opened to embrace him, againſt whom he had liſt up his hand? Methinks if thou believ'ſt that God hath ſhewn ſuch love to man, it cannot but have ſome force upon thee, to bring thee back again to him from whom thou haſt run away, and ſo long kept at a diſtance; and muſt needs prevail with thee to caſt away with grief and ſhame whatever is diſpleaſing to him, and doth eſtrange thee from him. And except thou be an unreaſonable Infidel, thou canſt not but believe it; for it is plainly revealed in Gods holy Word; where alſo we find the greatneſs of this love inculcated, in Gods having regard to us, and firſt looking after us, when we took no thought for our ſelves how to get his favour, 1 *Joh.* 4. 10. *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and ſent his Son to be a propitiation for our ſins.* Rom. 5. 6, 8. *For when we were yet without ſtrength, in due time Chriſt died for the ungodly. God commendeth his love toward us, in that whilſt we were yet ſinners, Chriſt died for us.* And as Chriſt died to *bring us to God*, ſo the conſideration of this love ſhould draw us to him. By this mercy chiefly we are engaged to *offer up our ſelves a living ſacrifice to God, which is our reaſonable ſervice.* Judge thy ſelf, is it not moſt reaſonable, that we ſhould give up our ſelves to that God, *who ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, and with him freely gives all good things to his people?* Canſt thou then find in thine heart to go on in provoking ſo good a God, and in ſlighting ſuch matchleſs love? If thou canſt, certainly thou haſt baniſht all gratitude, and haſt ſcarce one ſpark of common ingenuity left in thee, yea, thou haſt put off thy manhood, and art become little better than a ſenſeleſs bruit; for what ſhould ſooner

work

work upon a reaſonable creature to love another, than extraordinary and undeſerved kindneſs which he hath received from him? Nay, I might go farther, and tell thee, and that juſtly too, the very beaſts themſelves have more good nature than ſuch a ſtupid, unthankful ſinner as thou: For they have ſome ſenſe of a good turn, and ſome love to thoſe that do it; they know thoſe that feed them and keep them, and uſe not to do them any miſchief. The Dog does not uſe to bite his Maſter, nor the Horſe to kick at him that looks to him. And ſo indeed God himſelf complains of ungrateful men, that when *the Oxe knows his owner, and the Aſs his maſters crib, yet they did not know their Maker and Preſerver.* But to be ſhort, let me tell thee plainly, if thou find'ſt thy heart nothing mov'd with all this love that God hath revealed, in ſending Chriſt *to ſave us from the wrath to come*, by his own ſharp ſufferings, I can no way ſee but that thy caſe is full as bad, yea rather worſe than his, who believes not a word of all I have ſaid. Nay, how indeed can it be imagined that thou believeſt theſe things, if they make no impreſſion upon thee? except thou never uſe to think of them after thou haſt read or heard them: but there's the wonder, if thou doſt believe them, how thou canſt chuſe but think on them, and think again, till at length they work ſome good effect upon thee. But if thou haſt hitherto been ſo ſtrangely careleſs, let me once again deſire thee now at length to ſet upon the ſober thoughts of this unconceivable mercy manifeſted in the Goſpel, that when thou hadſt even deſtroy'd thy ſelf, God ſhould make haſte to thy help; that he ſhould ſend his own Son to undertake for thee, who was alſo willing to this work, and ſhould upon him puniſh thy ſins, and now after all, only calls thee to caſt away thy ſin, and to return to his love, which if thou wilt do, he is willing to be reconcil'd

to thee. And see if there be not good cause that thou should'st hearken to these invitations, and whether there can be given any just or tollerable excuse for thy disobedience. If the bittereſt enemy thou hadſt in the world should but save thy life when it was in his hands, much more if he should endanger himself, or undergo any loss for thy safety, I am confident this would soon take off thy spleen againſt him, and make thee very ready to be reſtored to his friendship. And why the goodneſs of God should not be as prevalent with thee I cannot imagine, if it be but soundly believed, and well thought on.

3. I may farther add, to engage thee to return to the Lord, from whom thou art fallen, another argument drawn also from the goodneſs of God, shewn in the death of Chriſt, as hereby it is moſt clearly discovered, *that there's some unſpeakable happineſs which was purchaſt by the Lord Jeſus for thoſe that come to God by him*, and to which he invites empty miſerable creatures. Thou canſt not imagine that God makes all this adoe with men for nothing. It was not upon any trivial errand that he sent his Son into the world; nor are they any slight inconsiderable things which he offers to as many as will receive him. It's true, the mercy had been rich and glorious, if Chriſt had only died to save us from miſery, and to have procured of God, that we might have been reduced to nothing, rather than to fry in everlasting burnings; and no tongue can tell what a priviledge the damned in hell would account this. But over and above, we read of a *Kingdom of Glory* which Chriſt will give to his followers. And how great this is, judge by the price that was paid for it; not *ſilver or gold*, or any such *corruptible* trifles, but the *precious Blood* of the *Son of God without price*, whoſe utmoſt value cannot be expreſt by Men or Angels; and no more can the

glory

glory hereby obtained. For if the Merchant be wise, the worth of his Jewel may be guest at by the price that he paid for it. Precious is the Soul of Man, and full dear did the redemption thereof cost, more than the whole world, or ten thousand such worlds as this: And is not, think you, the Souls portion answerable to its own excellency? And the purchased Possession answerable to the greatness of that cost that was laid out for it? When a common Slave may be freed for a few shillings, half a Kingdom will be thought little enough to redeem a captive Prince; and we afterward see there is as much difference betwixt them when they have got their liberty, the one sits on a dunghill, the other on a throne. For certain then, Christ Jesus came into the world, and laid down his life to exalt those that hearken to him, to the highest joy and bliss of which the nature of man is capable, in delivering them from all sin, rendring them exactly conformable to God, and placing them in a constant full communion with him. He that so *loved his Church that he gave himself for it, to sanctifie and cleanse it*, by all this design'd to *present it to himself a glorious Church*. Upon this account therefore methinks thou should'st easily be perswaded to cast away sin, which is thy misery, and return to God, who is thy only life and happiness, and that no mean happiness, as I have told thee is evident, amongst many other reasons, by the infinite value of the price that was given for it. Oh little do any, even the best and wisest on earth, conceive what are the full fruits of Christs blood; what miracles of divine love those are, which through endless millions of ages, will keep alive the admiration, joy and praise of Angels and Saints; and fill the mouths of Christs Redeemed ones with continual thankfulness, for that wisdom and mercy which contriv'd and wrought their delivery and exaltation. So that you see,

laying these things together, the death of Christ, as discovering the mercy of God, lays the greatest engagement that can be upon the sons of men, to break off their sins, and return to the obedience and love of God: in that there is so much mercy procured and tendred as may beget hope, and encourage to repentance, which is not like to be rejected; and as there is so great love expresst, as may well call for the return of love, and even soften the most stony heart; and as it discovers so great a blessedness to be had in God through Christ, as may prevail with all that love themselves, to make out after it, and depart from sin, which alone can keep them from it. And that's the second Consideration which the Death of Christ helps us to, in order to the working of a kindly Repentance, namely the great goodness of God hereby revealed to poor sinners.

3. From all that hath been said, will more clearly appear the hainous nature of sin, as a farther motive to Repentance, *in that it is a contradiction to all this love of God, and an undervaluing of the greatest mercy that was ever bestow'd upon the world*, being in effect, a trampling under foot of the blood of the Lord Jesus, whereby we should be sanctified. And hereby I mean those sins which have been committed since men heard of the Gospel. For as the evil of sin did appear in the greatness of those sufferings which Christ underwent to procure a pardon, so these his sufferings do exceedingly aggravate their sins, who have continued in them, after they have been told again and again what their Saviour hath done to make satisfaction for them, if they would not undervalue and despise it. Oh how have you made a shift so often to hear and read of the life and death of Christ, and yet have done all that in you lies to cross the end of his coming into the world, and to make his Death of none effect to you, whilst yet you

pretend

pretend to believe that his design was wholly for your good? Oh unthankful wretches, to make such a requital for such unvaluable love! As if you studied how you might most dishonour and displease him, who thought not his own life too dear to lay down for yours. Could you see him upon the Cross wounded, torn, and bruised for your sakes, and could you think of no other recompence but to give him fresh wounds by your wilful sins? Did he once *despise the shame and endure the cross* for you, and could you find in your hearts again to *put him to an open shame*, and as it were *crucifie him afresh?* Did he indeed deserve such dealing as this at your hands? Bethink thy self, Reader, whether this hath not been thy case. Hast thou not liv'd in those sins which Christ died to deliver thee from. And what hast thou thereby done less than proclame, *That* there is more to be got by thy lusts than by thy Saviour, *that* it's better to remain in thy polluted corrupt estate than to be wash'd in the blood of Christ, *whereby our consciences are purged from dead works to serve the living God?* And did they vilifie Christ more, that contemn'd him, jeer'd him, and put him to death? If thou take thy fleshly pleasures, and worldly profits, to be of greater advantage than any thing that can accrue to thee by Christs Death, dost thou not think as basely of him as any of his Crucifiers did? And hadst thou been there with this frame of heart, is it not most likely thou would'st have joyn'd with them, whatever thou maist now think? As they hated Christ because he told them the truth, and reprov'd them for sin, and therefore did all they could, to rid themselves of one whose preaching and presence was such a burthen to them, so dost thou appear in effect an hater of Christ, his life and doctrine, whilst thou walkest so flatly contrary thereto. And what's this less than desiring that there was no God

nor Christ to govern and judge thee; no such Rule as the Gospel to be thy Guide. Nay, let me tell thee, thou who hast profest thy self a *Christian*, and yet hast behav'd thy self thus unworthily toward Christ, thou art herein more guilty than the *Jews* themselves: for what they did was very much out of ignorance, but thou after thou hast known he is the Son of God, and that he laid down his life for our sins, hast manifested all this contempt of him, and rejected him from being thy Saviour, whilst thou would'st not be saved by him from thy reigning lusts, which thou hast loved more than him, as *Judas* loved the money for which he was hired to betray him. After thou hast known of that friendship which by the Cross of Christ was shewn to the ruined world, yet thou hast been an *enemy to this Cross*, whilst *thou hast made thy belly thy God, and minded earthly things*: whilst thou hast delightfully liv'd in the practice of any known sin. What then, were the *Jews prickt to the heart*, when they were convinc'd that they had *crucified that Jesus, whom God had made Lord and Christ?* and shall it not have the same effect on thee, to consider thou hast been guilty in some sort of the same wickedness, and hast shewn forth the very same spirit that was in them? For think not thy self more blameless, because thou never saw'st Christ, nor had'st any hand in his Death, nor did'st joyn with his enemies in accusing, condemning and reproaching him, but cry'st out against them as monsters of men, that persecuted the most spotless Innocence with such savage fierceness: for all this while, thy guilt may be as great as theirs, whilst thou hast as great an enmity against the Image of Christ, and the Law of Christ, as they had against his person. And that thou do'st not wound him, and spit in his face, is not from the goodness of thy nature, but because he is out of thy reach: for were he now before thee, and could it

gratifie thy luſts ſo to deal with him, it's much to be fear-ed thou would'ſt not ſtick at it. Whilſt the *Phariſees* condemned their Fore-fathers for killing the Prophets, they followed them in the very ſame ſin. And ſuppoſe a Father had two Sons, the one at mans eſtate, the other an infant, and the elder of theſe, by following wicked courſes ſhould break his Fathers heart, and occaſion his death; and the younger when he was grown up, ſhould lead the very ſame life that the other did, but yet ſhould take on him very much to condemn his Brother for being ſo diſobedient and hard-hearted, as to bring his Father to the grave; is it not plain for all this, that had he been in his Brothers ſtead he would have done the ſame that he did? ſince he alſo takes thoſe courſes which were ſo grievous to his Father. Thus it is to be remembred that *Sin* was that which put Chriſt to death as well as the *Jews*. And this *Sin* is it thou loveſt, though thou ſeemeſt to hate *them*. And as thoſe *Jews* put his Body to pain by their cruelties, ſo do'ſt thou grieve his Spirit by thy wickedneſs. And know, he takes it as hainouſly from thee, that thou ſhould'ſt thus diſpleaſe him, as he did from them that they ſhould perſecute him to the death. Nor art thou like to get a pardon at any eaſier rates than they, even no other way, than *looking on him whom thou by thy ſins haſt pierced*, and *bitterly mourning* for this thy bloodineſs and ingratitude. What ſay'ſt thou then after all this? canſt thou without tears and groans look back upon all the diſorders of thy life, whereby thou haſt done all that in thee lay, to make thoſe wounds of thy tender compaſſionate Saviour bleed afreſh, which he firſt receiv'd upon thy account? I believe thou thought'ſt not of this: no, if thou had'ſt, one would think thou could'ſt never have done it. Thy deſign was only to pleaſe thy fleſh by all thy ſenſual courſes; thou waſt

only full of projects to maintain and raise thy self and thy posterity by all thy worldly designs and businesses, wherewith through thy whole life thou hast been so swallowed up. But thou seest how the case stands; that this while thou hast been most vilely rejecting, and even trampling upon the Lord Jesus, who would have brought thee off from thy vain conversation, from all thy ungodliness and worldly lusts, and hath followed thee with his Word and Spirit to that end, and hath prest thee with arguments drawn from his matchless love, discovered by his Death, and hath besought thee to regard him, yea to take pity on thy self, but thou hast made light of all, and hast gone on as securely and quietly in the ways of sin, as if thou hadst never heard what sin did upon Christ. And what? art thou resolv'd to do so still? shall nothing stop thee in thy career? wilt thou not stay to hearken what a way it is thou walkest in? nor think what unvaluable mercies thou all this while treadest under feet? Hast thou not yet sufficiently abused thy Redeemers love and patience? Hast thou not made him wait long enough in vain? wilt thou still make shew of deafness to all those messages he sends thee? If so, yet be thou sure of this, thou shalt not be able to say at thy appearance before him, that thou never knew'st that sin was such an evil thing, and so provoking to him; for beside all other warnings that thou hast had, I now declare to thee who readest or hearest these words, that if thou still continuest in thy loose ungodly life, living in swearing, cursing, drunkenness, whoredome, covetousness, cozening, malice, or any other known sin, and wilfully neglectest thy duty to God, going whole days without prayer or reading Gods Word, profaning the Lords Day, neglecting Sacraments, if thou hold'st on this course, thou dost no better than *again crucifie and deny the Lord that bought*

bought thee, and so hast no reason to complain, if thou fall under the same condemnation, which thou thy self wilt acknowledge, *Judas* and *Pilate*, and the rest of Christs enemies deserve: and therefore that thou maist not be found amongst them, loaded with the same guilt at Judgment, I do once again in the name of Christ beseech thee with all speed to change thy heart and life, and use all means appointed to that end, and after all thy wandrings, now at length *return to him the good shepherd of souls, who laid down his life for his sheep.*

4. Lastly, the Death of Christ may powerfully move thee to repent of, and forsake all sin, as it holds forth this weighty, but sad truth, *that all those who are despisers of this Death, and by living and dying in their sins reap no saving benefit by it, shall in their own persons undergo insupportable torments for this their unbelief and wilful impenitence.* If thou believest the Gospel, thou canst not but acknowledge, that all men had been in a most miserable condition if Christ had not died; and thou wilt grant that sin is a most perilous mischievous thing, and an unspeakable provocation to the most holy God, since nothing could appease his wrath but the Death of Christ, without whose bloodshed we had obtain'd no remission: And what then dost thou think is like to be thy case, if through thy own fault, thou art never the better for all Christ hath done, but must thy self answer for thy sins, and bear the punishment they have deserved? Let the Death of Christ, I say, instruct thee what thou art like to expect if this be thy condition. *If*, as he himself speaks, *such things were done to the green tree, what shall be done to the dry?* If he who was without the least stain of original or actual sin drank such a bitter cup, when he stood in our stead, what will be the portion of their cup, who, being poor frail creatures, must make satisfaction for their own sins? How will they ever

hold

up under all the load of Gods hotteſt wrath, when he ſhall meet them in judgment, and cauſe his fury to reſt upon them? And above all, thy impenitent, obſtinate continuance in ſin, and contempt of Chriſt, will lye heavieſt upon thee in the day of vengeance. Theſe ſins againſt the Goſpel, againſt mercy, the greateſt and freeſt mercy, are moſt provoking to God, moſt inexcuſable in themſelves, and will therefore prove moſt pernicious to ſinners. Methinks then, if thou hadſt but any regard to thy ſelf, to thy own eaſe and comfort, this ſhould make thee out of love with ſin, to conſider how dear it's like to coſt thee, how pleaſant ſoever it may now ſeem. It was not for nothing that Chriſt felt ſo much ſorrow and pain, as thou ſhalt know to thy everlaſting woe, if thou pluck the heavy judgments of God on thy own head, by ſlighting him who would have kept them from off thee. Aſſure thy ſelf, poor ſinner, as bold and confident as now thou art, thou wilt never be able to conteſt with that wrath, which exerciſed even the ſtrength of Chriſt to bear it; thou art never like to go away lightly with that which he felt ſo heavy. For ſhame at length leave thy fooliſh plea, that God will be more merciful than to torment his creatures: for haſt thou not ſeen how he bruiſed his own Son, who never offended him, how he *bruiſed him*, I ſay, *for our iniquities*, and will he then ſpare thee, who in thy own perſon haſt been a moſt ſtubborn, hard-hearted rebel, and haſt caſt away with loathing the mercies that were again and again even preſt upon thee? Thou haſt no reaſon for ſuch fond expectations. What? wilt thou tell Chriſt at Judgment, that thou didſt not believe that ever God would be ſo ſevere, as to puniſh thee ſo dreadfully and everlaſtingly as his Word threatned? and that therefore thou took'ſt ſomewhat more liberty in thy life than he allowed thee? Dareſt

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thou come with such a plea as this? But if thou shouldst, what wilt thou answer to Christ, when he shall lay open what he underwent for thy sake, and how thou madest light of his love? will not this soon silence thee? If he ask thee whether thou hadst not evidence and proof enough of the evil and danger that was in sin, by his suffering so much for others transgressions, wilt thou have any pretence left to justifie thy self? I may perhaps afterward urge this consideration, but I mention it now as offered to us by the sufferings of Christ, which do most plainly declare, that doleful are the miseries prepared for those who get no good by him, but dye in their sins; which may bring all that are not in love with damnation, out of love with that sin which will at length plunge them into it. And thus you see how many motives to true repentance are afforded us from the serious meditation on the Cross and Passion of Christ: as this discovers to us the hainous nature of sin; and as there is such mercy and love hereby reveal'd, as may work upon, and reclaim all that are ingenuous, grateful, or wise for themselves; and as this makes sin more monstrously vile which shall be committed against such mercy; and as it shews that all men living in sin, dying out of Christ, are like to undergo unsufferable torments for their obstinacy. And thus I have finisht the second qualification which is necessary to all worthy Communicants, to wit, True Repentance, an unfeigned sorrow for, a detestation of, and a turning from all wilful sin in heart and life.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

III. *A right remembring the great end of the Death of Christ, to redeem us from all iniquity, and sanctifie us. Of Faith and Covenanting with Christ.*

IT must needs be, that if we rightly remember the Death of Christ in the Sacrament, we must then remember to what end and purpose this was: and this we shall plainly find in Scripture to be, that he might redeem Man from that sinful miserable state he was faln into, and restore him to a state of holiness and happiness in the enjoyment of God from whom he was faln. So 1 *Pet.* 3. 18. *For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. Eph.* 2. 16, 17, 18. *Heb.* 7. 25. And this is the meaning of all those places which speak of the *Redemption* we have obtain'd by Christ, if we take it in its largest signification. And to this purpose he offers himself to Men to be their Redeemer, to conferr upon them the pardon of their sin, and give them victory over all their corruptions, and the temptations of Satan, and to lead them by his Spirit through this dangerous world, till he shall bring them with triumph into the *kingdom of the Father.* Now hence it follows, *that no man can remember Christ as he ought, who will not receive him to these ends and purposes for which he offers himself,* which is our effectual believing in him. For is he a fit man to celebrate Christs remembrance, who hath no love for him, nor any liking to his undertaking, nor will be perswaded to comply therewith? And such are all they who reject him and the tenders of his mercy, except they might have them in their own way, and that do flatly contradict his design in becoming our Mediatour, by

continuing ſtill in their natural corrupt eſtate, alienated from God, and liable to his wrath: that is, who are unbelievers. So that here I mean no more than, *That without Faith in Chriſt we cannot rightly remember him*, without we ſo believe that he is the only Saviour of Mankind, that we reſolve, he, and none but he, ſhall be our Saviour, in the way that he himſelf thinks fit! But to make it yet plainer, how unfit all ſuch rejecters of Chriſt are to come to this holy Supper, conſider, that our receiving of the Sacrament is appointed to be on our part, as a token and ſign of our making and renewing our Covenant with God in Chriſt, in which if we be ſincere, then it is a ſeal on Gods part, of his being in Covenant with us; a confirmation of our belief, that he will be our God, and fulfil all his promiſes to us; and herein he gives us an earneſt and pledge of the future bleſſings which we ſhall receive from him through his Son, as I ſhall ſhew under the next Head. Does it not then hence appear, that all thoſe who will not be held in any ſuch Covenant, are moſt unfit perſons to come to this Sacrament; the very deſign of our coming to which, is to ſhew that we are a people in Covenant with God: and by this ſolemn action, taking and eating the Bread, and drinking the Wine, we are to teſtifie that we are ſo, and do hereby bind our ſelves ſo to remain. What would this be, but with much formality to mock that God who *will not be mocked*; and even to run upon our own damnation, provoking the Lord to deſtroy thoſe, who ſo impudently take his name in vain. By this practice men are guilty of a down right lye, yea of groſſeſt perjury: for Chriſt in effect ſaith, *All you, and you only that take me for your Lord and Saviour come and partake of this Feaſt which I have appointed in remembrance of the Redemption I have wrought for you*, and yet multitudes who will not take him for their *Lord to rule*

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over them, nor *will be saved from their sins* by him, thrust in and partake of this Supper. This is just as if a General of an Army, having a mind to single out some of his Souldiers for some design, should say, *All you that are willing to go along with me, hold up your hands*, and yet many should hold up their hands who refuse to go: what would this be but to befool themselves and abuse their Leader? Or, as if at the first appointment of the Passeover it had been commanded, that they, and they only, should eat of the Paschal Lamb, who would go out of *Ægypt* into *Canaan*, under the conduct of *Moses*; and yet many of the *Israelites* should prepare and eat it, either because they were hungry, or because they would do as the rest did, without ever thinking what was the meaning of this action, or what they hereby engag'd themselves to, being resolv'd still to continue in *Ægypt*, neither caring for *Moses*, nor the *Canaan* which he should lead them to. Thus when Christ commands, that all those who will depart out of the *Egyptians* bondage they are in to sin and Satan, and be guided by him through the Wilderness of this world, till they come to the heavenly *Canaan*, that they should appear at a Feast which he hath made on purpose to entertain them, there throng in others to this Table who have no *right to eat thereat*, as having no resolutions to leave their sin, and thus to follow Christ, who would lead them to glory. These are the men that are found without their *wedding garment*, whom the Master of the Feast will draw out from amongst the rest, and dispose of them to a place and company more suitable for them, as you may read, *Mat.* 22. 10, 11, 12, 13. So that I hope you see that it's a most unsuitable and unlawful thing for any man to address himself to this Ordinance, who is not heartily in Covenant with God, since herein he professeth himself to be so, and therefore if he

he be not, he will be found a lyar both to God and Man.

But since this is made by some the very nature and design of the Lords Supper to be a Foederal Rite, or an action testifying and confirming a Covenant betwixt God and man, as in the Eastern and other Countries they were wont to ratifie their Leagues by feasting together, and as they who eat of the sacrifices offered to Devils thereby had fellowship with Devils, as the *Jews* by eating of their sacrifices held communion with, and profest subjection to God, as you may see them parallell'd, 1 *Cor.* 10. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20. since I say, this is on mans part a sign of his being in covenant with God; I shall somewhat fuller explain what this Covenant is, that you may understand whether you are cordially entred thereinto, and are willing to continue in it, that so you may know whether you are like to be entertained as worthy guests at the Lords Table, which is proper to his Covenant-people.

In a word then, the Covenant which we renew at the Lords Supper, is the very same with that you were entred into by Baptism, when you were baptiz'd in the Name of (and thereby engaged to) the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and therefore obliged to those duties which we ow to God in the several relations wherein he stands to us, which are denoted by the Persons of the sacred Trinity: That is, we are hereby oblig'd to acknowledge God the Father to be our Creator and Preserver, and therefore to behave our selves as his creatures ought, submitting our selves to his Commands and Providences, and placing our happiness in pleasing him and enjoying his love; God the Son made man, that is Jesus Christ, we are hereby bound to take for our only Saviour, through whom alone we hope for the pardon of our offences, and for ability to serve and please God, and for acceptance and happiness with him: And

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God the Holy Ghoſt we promiſe to take for our Sanctifier, to have our ſouls by him renewed after the Image of God, and thoſe graces given into us which were purchaſt for us by Chriſt, and the evidences of Gods love, and of our title to the future bleſſedneſs to be clear'd up, and aſſur'd to our conſciences; the Holy Word alſo which he inſpir'd the Prophets and Apoſtles to write, we are hereby engag'd to take for the Rule of our faith and life. And this is your entring into Covenant with, and being conſecrated to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; which doth neceſſarily ſuppoſe and include our renouncing the fleſh, the world, and the Devil, which is in effect the ſame with Repentance for ſin, which I ſpoke to largely under the laſt Head: For he who is truly humbled for and reſolved to forſake ſin, doth hereby renounce his fleſh which is pleas'd with ſin, and will not make carnal ſelf his chief end, and he alſo renounceth the world, which is the fuel and food of his luſts, all that wherewith the carnal part is gratified, as matters of pleaſure, profit, honour, and the like, not regarding them as means to his happineſs; and he renounceth the Devil, who, by temptations drawn from theſe worldly things, would entice him to ſin, and that wicked nature alſo which does the office of a Tempter with him. All you then, who have been baptiz'd into the Chriſtian Faith, are thereby bound to take God for your Supream Governor and chief Happineſs, and Jeſus Chriſt for your Mediatour and way to the Father, and the Holy Spirit for your Sanctifier and Guide. And ſince you were Infants when you were thus firſt dedicated to God, it behoves you that are now come to the uſe of reaſon, and are reſolv'd, by the grace of God, to be ſtedfaſt in this holy Covenant, to come to the Lords Table, and there profeſs theſe reſolutions, and by the receiving of this Sacra-

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ment in the presence of the heart-searching God, and all your fellow-Christians, to renew your engagement that you will take God for your God, and that you will be his people. Since then it is so plain, that they, and they only, are worthy Communicants, who have in heart made this Covenant with God in Christ, which they are to profess, solemnize, and confirm, by eating and drinking the Sacramental bread and wine; it remains that all, who would not venture upon damnation, by doing this unworthily, ought to enter into a faithful examination of themselves, whether indeed this be their condition and frame of heart, or not. And let me beseech thee, Reader, faithfully to set upon this Work, as a business of the greatest concernment that ever thou hadst to do in thy life; namely, to see that thou art sincerely in covenant with God through his Son; for this is the very heart and substance of Religion, the Sum of all Christianity, and that upon which thy everlasting happiness wholly depends; know but this once, and thou mayest know that Heaven will be thy portion, shouldst thou dye at this hour.

And here, that I may do what in me lies to help thee to the true knowledge of thy self, let me first advise thee to look carefully into thy own heart, for that's thy surest way, if thou art but well acquainted with the workings thereof, and wilt deal impartially. And in this searching into the state and temper of thy Soul, I would wish thee to put these questions to thy self which I shall ask thee, and to give in a true answer.

I demand of thee then, what is that great good on which thou hast plac'd thy highest love? the obtaining of which thou hast made the great business of thy life, and which if thou couldst but attain to, thou believest thou shouldst be satisfied and made perfectly happy? Canst thou say, and that truly, that God hath the up-

moſt place in thy heart, that his authority ſways thee moſt, and that, for the main, all things that concern thee are regarded but in order to him? Doſt thou make it thy principal ſtudy and trade to pleaſe him? And doſt thou count of nothing as fit to make thee a portion but his everlaſting love? If it be thus with thee, then thou maiſt ſafely conclude that indeed thou haſt made God thy chief end. But enquire diligently whether it be not quite otherwiſe, and whether thou haſt not ſet up thy *ſelf* in a diſtinction from God, becoming thy own Idol? Art thou not poſſeſt with high thoughts of thy *ſelf?* loving and admiring thy *ſelf*, ſeparate from him who gave thee thy being? It's true, the man who is moſt heartily devoted to God hath the greateſt love and veneration of himſelf, but it is as he is Gods creature; and it is his ſoul which hath his higheſt eſteem; and he ſeeks his happineſs by ſubjecting himſelf to God, and therefore prefers, adores, and admires God infinitely above himſelf, regarding himſelf in and for God, accounting it the end of his being to ſerve his Makers will, and deſiring no other felicity, than the feeling of that love of God which he manifeſts to all ſuch humble obedient ones. But the carnal man, though he may have ſome reverence for God, and may yield him ſome tribute of ſervice, ſome prayers, ſome praiſes, and ſome ſubjection, yet all this is but in order to his *carnal ſelf*, for the procuring for it ſuch things as cannot be had without God; ſo that God is regarded but as a means to *ſelf*, and with a reſpect hereto is all his ſervice of God, for the manner and meaſures of it, fram'd and limited. Thus may the covetous man, whoſe chief end is to enrich *himſelf*, pray to God for riches, praiſe him for riches, be ſo far juſt and charitable as he thinks may forward his thriving; yea he may be in all things ſo far religious as hinders not his chief end, but let this once come

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in competition with any duty to God, so that by serving him he should impoverish himself, you shall soon perceive what is his God, and what rules him most, as you have an example in the young man that came to Christ, *Mat.* 19. 21, 22. wherefore examine, I say, whether thou art not a lover of thy self more than God. Does not thy own will and fancy ordinarily guide thee in thy actions and affairs? and is not that course taken which most conduceth to the interest of thy flesh? should'st thou not then account thy self well enough provided for, if thou wast but compleatly furnish'd with all that in the world, which tends to the accomplishing and gratifying of man as he is an inhabitant of the earth? And is not thy labour most for, thy desire after, thy delight in such things as tend to the pleasing and advancing thy self in the world? Hast thou not been most taken up in making provisions for thy flesh? thinking with thy self, that to be happy was to live a merry life, and take thine ease and pleasure; or else to get more money than thy neighbours, and to have more respect and esteem, that where-ever thou goest thou maist be praised and admired? Hast thou not taken those for the happiest men that have the greatest share of these things? and hast thou not therefore envied them? and hated them, if they have stood in thy way and kept thee from the like? Reader, what saith thy Conscience to this? Do but hearken, and it will speak plain and tell the truth. Sure thou canst not but know what thou makest the great end of thy life, what it is for that thou desirest to stay in the world; what thou risest for every morning, and for what thou goest into this company and that, and takest all thy journeys, and wholly employest thy hands and head. All this is either for God or for carnal self principally; for there cannot be two chief ends. And if thou art one that livest to, and idolizest

zeſt thy ſelf, for ſhame take not on thee to love God above all, as thou uſeſt to do: for indeed thou doſt not truly and properly take him to be God, not thy God.

Again, let me ask thee, haſt thou ever found in thy Soul powerful and prevalent convictions, that thou haſt no way to attain true happineſs, nor to eſcape miſery, but by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt? And haſt thou thereupon heartily conſented to his offers, and to the conditions he hath appointed for the ſaving of thy ſoul, being willing to be taught and govern'd by him, only hoping for pardon of ſin, grace, and glory to be given to thee by God through him, and for his ſake? Put the queſtion to thy own heart, didſt thou ever yet ſee an abſolute neceſſity of Chriſt, ſo that thou took'ſt thy ſelf for an undone creature without him? And hath thy ſoul been kindly and thankfully affected with this amazing myſtery of love, that God hath ſhown to poor helpleſs ſinners through his Son? Hath it warmed and rejoyced thy heart to conſider it? Thus in ſome good meaſure will it be with thee, if thou art a true Believer in Chriſt. And this depends upon the former: for if thou haſt taken the everlaſting enjoyment of God for thy chief happineſs, thou wilt then be ready to comply with that way which leads to this end, and that's only ſhew'd to us in and by Chriſt, who is himſelf the *way to the Father*, and *none can come to God but by him.* And when thou art once throughly perſwaded of this, thou canſt not but willingly reſign thy ſelf to him, conſenting to be ſav'd by him, on what terms, and in what way he ſhall appoint and preſcribe to thee: and this firm and prevalent conſent of thy ſoul is true and ſaving faith, to which the pardon of ſins and everlaſting life is promiſed. This is *coming to Chriſt, receiving him*; and ſeveral other ways it's expreſt in Scripture, but moſt commonly call'd our believing *in him*, which includes

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in it, our truſting to him for all mercy, our hearkening to his teachings, and our reſolution ſincerely to obey his commands, and imitate his example. Examine thy ſelf well then, whether thou haſt ſuch a ſound faith wrought in thee or not. Haſt thou not rather contented thy ſelf with a ſluggiſh unfruitful Belief, that Chriſt is the ſaviour of the world, without ever minding thy own particular need which thou ſtand'ſt in of him? nor ever making enquiry what he would have thee do to be ſaved? Have not thy eyes been ſo far blinded, that thou never yet ſaw'ſt ſo much evil in ſin as ſhould make thee look out for a deliverer, and prize him who hath done ſo much to redeem thee? But canſt make ſhift well enough to live without Chriſt, ſo thou canſt but get thoſe things which thou now takeſt to be more uſeful for thee, in order to thy happineſs? Thus will it be with thee, if thou haſt ſet thy heart upon the pleaſing and advancing of thy carnal ſelf; thou art not then like to ſee any great need of Chriſt, or any excellency in him that ſhould make him deſirable: for he came not into the world to help carnal wretches to the enjoyment of their Idols, but to turn their hearts off them, to the living and true God. And therefore as they who have choſe this God for their portion, do make it their great work to get an intereſt in Chriſt the Mediator, and do live upon, and make uſe of him to bring them to their portion, ſo they that have made the pleaſing of their fleſh with any worldly thing their ultimate end, they are diligent in the uſing of all means that may help on this their baſe end. The voluptuous, bruiſh ſinners hunt after ſenſual pleaſures in their meat and drink, wantonneſs, ſloth, exceſſive ſports, and merry jovial company. The covetous man who hath a greedy inſatiable fancy to gratifie, wholly ſpends himſelf in treaſuring up wealth, and he taſts ſweetneſs in nothing

but his gains. His Bonds and Bills and Leaſes are better things to him than the Covenant of Grace; and his Houſes and Lands and Money more precious than the Blood of Chriſt. And ſo the proud and ambitious, that would fain have much eſteem and honour in the world, (which is the moſt natural vice to almoſt every man) they purſue their deſign, by labouring to get into high places, to make great men their friends; recommending themſelves to the world, by their ſumptuous Houſes, great Retinues, rich Cloaths, gentile deportment, and the like braveries; others by their ſtrength, beauty, wit, learning, and the like Accompliſhments of Body or Mind. Thus you ſee, according to the nature of mens happineſs, they make uſe of means to reach it. Search well therefore, whether ſome of theſe or the like empty trifles have not been more ſet by, and laboured for, than Chriſt himſelf, if ſo, never ſay thou takeſt him for thy Mediator, for it is apparent, thou doſt not make him ſo. No, but thoſe things are indeed thy Mediators, which thou makeſt uſe of to accompliſh thy ſelfiſh deſigns. And hereby thou doſt in effect as much reject and vilifie Chriſt, as if thou didſt revolt from him, and take *Mahomet* for thy Saviour. Oh beware of deceiving thy ſelf in this point, which is ſo eaſie, ſo common, and dangerous; to talk of truſting and relying on Chriſt, whilſt the heart relyes moſt upon ſome outward enjoyment to bring it to the happineſs it ſeeks for; and the moſt they look for from Chriſt is, to have him keep them from Hell, after they have been all their days gratifying their luſts, and ſerving the Devil, but they never think of improving his as a Mediator betwixt God and their ſouls, expecting all their mercies of this life and the next, to come by him; and by him offering up all their ſervices to God. Wherefore I beſeech you to remember, that nothing will prove you ſincerely in

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Covenant with Chriſt, as one of his living members, but a thorow, ſtedfaſt willingneſs to be brought to happineſs by him in his own way, and let it be your care to examine whether you are thus heartily willing.

And then laſtly, haſt thou ſubmitted thy ſoul to the powerful workings of the Holy Ghoſt, to renew and regenerate thee? Haſt thou faithfully rendred up thy ſelf to him, to be transformed into the divine likeneſs, to have thy corruptions purged away, and all ſaving graces implanted in thee? It is the Office of the Holy Ghoſt to carry on Chriſts intereſt in the ſouls of men, to *fulfil all the pleaſure of his goodneſs, and the work of faith with power*, to bring them to the Father by the Son. No man can cry *Abba Father*, and be filled with a child-like diſpoſition and nature, but he who hath received this Spirit of adoption; and no man can *call Jeſus Lord*, and be heartily ſubject to him, but by the help of this almighty Spirit. He ſhews men the vanity of the Creature, and the goodneſs, the fulneſs, and all-ſufficiency of God, and enables the heart firmly to cleave to him: He convinces men of ſin, and ſhews them the odiouſneſs and danger of it, and diſcovers to them a Saviour, by whom they may be redeemed from all their iniquities, from the dominion, and from the condemnation of ſin: And he begets in the ſoul a ſaving faith, making men not only willing, but earneſtly deſirous to accept of Chriſt to both theſe ends. Reflect upon thy ſelf then, whether thou haſt experienced any ſuch workings in thy ſoul or not, whether thou art changed by this divine power into a new and heavenly nature, and are hereby become *a new creature, as all in Chriſt are, old things being done away*. Haſt thou ever found the vigorous and warm movings of this holy Spirit upon thy heart, conveying light and life to thy dark ſoul, *dead in treſpaſſes and ſins?* Haſt thou carefully cheriſhed theſe motions,

and complied with this ſanctifying work, which ſpreads it ſelf through the whole man? And art thou willing to be govern'd by him, to hearken to his voyce within thee, and to that word which was inſpired by him to be a lamp to thy feet? If theſe things be ſo, then indeed thou haſt performed the engagement that was laid upon thee, by being baptized into the Name of the Holy Ghoſt. But call thy ſelf to account, whether it hath not been quite otherwiſe with thee. Doſt thou not ſtill remain in the carnal ſelfiſh ſtate, alienated from the life of God through a blind mind, and a wicked ſtubborn will, being ſtill at enmity with him? Haſt thou not quenched the Spirit? and ſtifled convictions, and reſiſted his operations upon thy ſoul? Art thou not rather guided by the ſeducing ſpirit and thy own unmortified luſts? Do not theſe ſtill remain in ſtrength and power, ſo that whatever they draw thee to, muſt be done, let the Word and Conſcience ſay what they will? If it be thus, never boaſt of having God to be thy Maker, nor Chriſt thy Redeemer: for if thou art not ſanctified by the Holy Ghoſt, God will never own thee for his, who accepts of none but an holy people.

Thus by looking careſully into your hearts, you may diſcern whether you are truly in covenant with God, or not. And if this ſeem any matter of difficulty, to know what your hearts are; or rather, leſt you ſhould pretend your hearts are thus right, when it is no ſuch thing, I ſhall give one inſtance more whereby you may know how you ſtand related to God, and that is by the conſideration of your lives and converſations: for, if you are ſincerely devoted to God in your hearts, then you muſt needs ſhew it in the holineſs of your lives, which is nothing elſe but the keeping of that Covenant which is made betwixt God and the ſoul. If you do indeed *follow after holineſs*, it's a ſign you account

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it your chief happineſs *to ſee God.* If you are *patient* and *unwearied in well-doing*, it's a ſign you ſeek for *honour and glory* with God. And if you keep the Commandments of Chriſt *endeavouring to walk as he walk'd*, it's manifeſt that you love him and believe in him. *If you bring forth much fruit, hereby you and all men may know that you are Chriſt's Diſciples, that you are living branches of him, the true Vine; then have you received Chriſt, if you walk in him.* And if you ſhew forth the fruits of the Spirit in your lives, it's a ſure token that his graces are ſown in your hearts. *If you are led by, and walk after the Spirit*, then indeed the Spirit is with and in you, and *you live in him, Gal.* 5. 25. But on the other hand, it's as certain thou art a ſtranger and alien from this Covenant I have before deſcribed, if thou be one that ſerveſt the Devil rather than the true God. Make what profeſſion thou wilt to love God and believe in Chriſt, if thou alloweſt thy ſelf in any one known ſin, all thy great pretences will at length come to nothing. What, doth that man *love the Lord, who doth not hate evil?* Nay, who delights in that which the Lord abhors, and wherewith he is griev'd and provok'd to fury? Doth he take Chriſt for his Lord, who will not be obedient to him? Doth he take him for his Phyſitian, who would not be heal'd, but had rather keep his Diſeaſes? Beware as thou loveſt thy ſoul, of that dangerous miſtake, that thy belief in Chriſt may ſerve turn well enough for thy ſalvation, without an holy life; for if thou leadeſt not an holy life, it's moſt certain thou doſt not truly believe in Chriſt. For it is not enough to prove thee ſuch a Believer as ſhall be ſaved, to truſt in Chriſt's merits, and hope God will be merciful to thee for his ſake, but it is alſo of abſolute neceſſity that thou believe in him as Prophet, and King, and accept of him to teach and govern thee, if ever thou

hope

hope for any saving benefit by him: and therefore thou must believe his Promises and Threatnings, and faithfully endeavour to yield an universal obedience to his Commands, and to follow his footsteps: So that to say thou hast a good faith in Christ whilst thou livest an ungodly life, is as flat a contradiction, as to say, thou art faithful to thy Prince, whilst thou risest up in arms against him; and so much as an oath of Allegiance and Fidelity to their Soveraign doth tye men from Rebellion, so much doth Saving Faith bind them against wickedness. And to talk of keeping thy faith firm whilst thou livest in disobedience to thy Lord, is as if a Wife should say, she was careful in keeping her Marriage covenant whilst she lived in open adultery. Thus much here I was willing to speak of this, that thou maist be the more plainly convinc'd, that if thou livest in, or lovest any sin, and wilt not leave it, though Gods Word and thy own Conscience condemn thee for it, that then thou art not sincerely in covenant with God. Wherefore look well into thy life, consider thy ways, how thou behavest thy self towards God and man, and in all thy carriage in the World. Art thou not a wilful neglecter of thy duty to thy Maker, living without a sense or acknowledgment of him in all thy ways, not so much as once in a day, or perhaps in a whole week, setting thy self seriously to pray to him in thy Family or Closet, not taking any pleasure in reading his word, or in thinking and speaking of him to thy own and others advantage? dost thou not profane the Lords day, and turn thy back with contempt upon the Ordinances of God? Art thou not us'd to swearing, cursing, and taking the holy Name of God in vain in thy common discourse? or art thou not guilty of lying, cozenage, injustice in thy trading and dealing with men, of oppression and unmercifulness to the poor? Dost thou

not

not live in envy and malice, allowing thy self in railing, back-biting, and slandering? Or, dost not thou riotously abuse the good creatures of God, eating and drinking to excess, unfitting thy self for Gods service, and studying only to please thy palate? Dost thou not pollute thy soul with wanton thoughts, discourses, and unclean practises? Dost thou not mis-spend thy time in idleness and vanity, carelessly wasting precious hours that should be improv'd for Gods honour, by getting or doing good? Dost thou not give way to thy pride in thy discourse, carriage or attire, lavishing money and time for the gratifying of this base lust? Put such questions as these to thy soul, and answer them impartially and truly. And if thou livest in any of these, or the like wilful sins, be assured thou hast been false to the Covenant which thou was entred into in Baptism: But if thy Conscience can truly witness for thee, that thou *hatest every false way, hast a respect to all Gods Commandments*, earnestly desiring and diligently endeavouring in all thy ways to approve thy self to the most righteous God, longing after nothing more than that thou maist walk unblameably before him, then thou maist safely conclude that thou art one of Gods Covenant-people, and as such he will own thee, and to thee belong the priviledges and benefits of the Covenant, and therefore the Seals of it too; so that thou hast very good warrant to address thy self to this Sacrament, whereby all the Promises of God are confirm'd to his people, and whereby they profess the hearty rendring up of themselves to him.

By this time I hope thou seest what it is to be cordially in covenant with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, which all are engaged to by Baptism, and which Covenant they renew at the Lords Supper, namely, to love God above all, and to account his love thy

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chiefeſt happineſs, to accept of Jeſus Chriſt as thy only Saviour to bring thee to this happineſs; and to be willing to be ſanctified by the Holy Ghoſt, and led by him in the ways of holineſs. Now, if thou findeſt thy ſelf ſtrange to all this, and didſt never yet feel thy ſoul brought under the bond of this Covenant, my next work is to perſwade thee to it, even to beſeech thee deliberately and ſeriouſly, but yet ſpeedily, to make a firm and everlaſting Covenant with God to be his upon his own terms, to be abſolutely devoted to him in heart and life, as thou waſt in Baptiſm. Something I ſhall ſay to prevail with thee, if poſſible, for the performance of this weighty indiſpenſible Duty. But by the way take notice, that all I am exhorting thee to may well be included in this one word, even *Believing in Jeſus Chriſt*, which is that qualification I am now upon, diſcovering the neceſſity of it in all Communicants. And this I would have thee to obſerve, that thou maiſt the better underſtand what I mean when I preſs thee to *faith in Chriſt*, as making it all one with the Covenant now mentioned: For, as I have before intimated, he that truly believes in Chriſt receives him in the quality and office of a Mediator, by him to attain to that happineſs which he offers to men; and conſents to be brought to it in that way which he thinks fit to direct. Now the happineſs he offers, is the enjoyment of God in glory, and this he hath procured for Believers by his ſatisfaction and interceſſion, and fits them for it by his Spirit, which cures all their diſtempers, and raiſeth them to a perfect love of God and likeneſs to him, and ſo makes them capable of full communion with him, which is their bleſſedneſs. So that to receive Chriſt as he offers himſelf to us (which is our faith in him) not only ſignifies our dependance on his merits for the pardon of ſin, but alſo includes in it our

love

love to God above all, to whom we hope to be reconciled and brought nigh by Christ, and contains in it our resolution to submit to the working and guidance of the Holy Ghost, who purifies the heart, and enables us to follow after holiness, till we are brought to the sight and fruition of God. I shall attempt to make it as plain as may be, by an easie comparison. Suppose a King had banish'd a great company of Subjects for rebelling against him, into a foreign Countrey, where they stay so long, that they have even forgot the manners and language of their own Nation, and are become wild and barbarous, like the people they convers'd with; and after some time, this King, taking pity on his banish'd Subjects, should agree with his only Son, that if he would venture upon the hazards and troubles of so long a journey, he should take a chief Officer along with him, and go to these Rebels, with proclamation of pardon to all such who should acknowledge their crime, and were willing to return into their own land, there to live in the obedience and favour of their Soveraign; and in order hereto, would come to this Officer to be taught by him the language of their Countrey, and how to behave themselves so as they might please their King, and be fit to be in his presence: When now the King's Son should come to these men, and shew them his Commission, and perswade them to be ruled by him, who is come so tedious and dangerous a journey to free them from the miseries of banishment, proposing the terms on which he will deliver them, all those that believe he speaks true, and hath power to help them, and being willing to be delivered upon his conditions, do put their trust in him, by his means to be restored to the favour of their Prince, and their former habitations, they do by this very action manifest their love to their native Countrey, and their willingness to live in obe-

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dience to their King whom they had displeased; and do hereby also engage to accept of this Officer that accompanies the Prince to teach them the language and manners of the Countrey they are about to return to. The application of this to the matter in hand is very easie: for in the same manner doth Faith in Christ, and our acceptance of him, imply our love to God, and desire to live for ever in his favour, which is that Christ offers us, and by his death hath purchased for true Believers; and it implies also our willingness to be sanctified by his Spirit, that we may be made meet to live for ever in the love of God.

Oh hearken then and give ear, all you lost sinners, (somewhat to pursue the former comparison) all you that are the posterity of sinful *Adam*, who by his transgression banish'd himself out of Paradise; you that are wandring up and down in this wilderness, and have even forgot the heavenly Country, as if you were made only to be inhabitants of this lower world, here to live with the Beasts a miserable life for a while, and hereafter to dye like Beasts that perish; and accordingly make it your only work to run, and ride, to labour and toil for such things as are needful for this present life, without regarding that which is to come; whilst you are thus estranged from God, forgetful of, and daily running farther and farther from him, behold a message of glad tydings and great joy is dispatch'd to you from heaven. The great God that made you, takes pity on you, and is even grieved to see what a misery you have plunged your selves into, when he made you so happy. He is by no means pleased, that such noble Creatures, lately raised out of nothing for such glorious ends, should through their own folly, and the subtilty of the tempter, be debased into such a wretched, sordid slavery. Wherefore in pursuance of his gracious designs

ſigns for your recovery, and to ſhew how his bowels yern over you, he hath ſent his own Son out of his boſome, who is one with himſelf, to take our nature upon him, and to become one with us, that he might be every way fit to be a Mediatour betwixt God and us; that he might teach us by his doctrine, encourage us by his example, and make atonement for us by his death. Accordingly all this is done, the Son of God is come into the world, and hath abundantly evidenced his Commiſſion from the Father, to treat with loſt mankind about their reconciliation to him; for the procuring of which reconciliation, he laid down his life; and being riſen again, he furniſh'd his Ambaſſadors with authority to aſſure all, that *life was given to the world, and this life was in the Son, ſo that he who hath the Son, hath life.* And this is that meſſage which the Miniſters of the Goſpel at this day, and to the end of the world, are to proclame to the ſons of men. This, Sirs, is the joyful ſound that is now in your ears: If you will but truſt your ſouls with Chriſt, and conſent that his Spirit ſhould teach you the language of *Canaan*, and work in you an heavenly nature and diſpoſition ſutable to the ſtate and place he would bring you to, then ſhall you be happy with God for ever. What ſay you then? ſhall Chriſt be your Redeemer, to bring you to glory upon theſe terms or not? What have you to object againſt him? Do you think he doth not mean as he ſpeaks? or that he cannot do what he promiſeth? Dare you queſtion his power, his willingneſs, or his truth? If you will not believe his Word, yet give credit to his Death. Does not that tell you he is in good earneſt with you, and fully bent upon the Redemption of Mankind? And beſide the miracles wrought by, and upon him, which fully witneſs for him, let his Reſurrection put you out of doubt, that *him hath God the Father ſealed* to this Office

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of Mediator: By this, assurance is given to all men, that he is to be Judge of the world, and therefore that all are delivered into his hands, to save or condemn, as he shall think fit: and he hath plainly declared, that *to those who receive him, he will give power to become the Sons of God*; but as for those who reject him, upon them *the wrath of God abides for ever*. But these things I shall branch out into two or three particular considerations, to perswade you, if it may be, to accept of Christ the Prince of Peace, who comes with the tender of peace to your souls: to accept of him, I say to wash you in his Blood, and sanctifie you by his Spirit, that at length he may present you without spot or blemish into the presence of his Father.

CHAP. V.

Perswasions to accept of the Redeemer, and give up the Soul in Covenant to him.

1. AND first consider, *I am only perswading you to be Christians, which you profess your selves to be.* And will you not indeed be what you profess? Why do you embrace the name, if you dislike the thing? I know you have false measures, whereby you judge of Christianity, and think perhaps, that all who are Baptized, and keep their Church, and call themselves Christians, are so indeed: but you should rather say, such do profess themselves so to be, but they are not so in Gods account, except they are true to this profession. He that wears a Noble-mans Livery, seems to be his Servant; but if he will not acknowledge him to be his Master, by doing what he commands him, you will scarce say such a one's his Servant; however, not a Servant to

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be maintained, but cashier'd and punished: and if you are but such kind of Christians, you will acknowledge it was as good you were open Infidels. Will you think it enough to prove a man your friend, that he calls you so, and gives you many good words, and promiseth you great matters, and in the mean time secretly does all he can to hurt and displease you? Even thus hath Christ decided the case, and told us who are his *Friends*, not they that onely speak honourably of him, and pretend great esteem for him; no, but they who *do what he commands them*, John 15. 14. And if you will not do thus, and yet will needs please your selves with a conceit that you are Christians, notwithstanding, you may easily be convinced, that if your Christianity will not bring you to be listed with the friends of Christ, but leaves you amongst his Enemies, its like to do you very little service. Wherefore he is only the true Christistian, who takes Christ in all those relations in which he is represented in the Gospel, and is willing to perform the duties that these relations bind him to. And to such a receiving of Christ I am urging you. Can you be Christians without taking Christ for your Lord? And can you do this without you are willing to be governed by him? Is he a Disciple of Christ that will not learn of him, and that will not believe what he speaks to be truth? To give an instance or two, Christ bids you *learn of him to be meek and lowly*, and if you will not do thus, are you indeed any of his Disciples? He tells you, *his yoke is easie, and his burthen light*, and therefore requires you to take them on you; if now you think them hard and heavy, and therefore reject them, do you not in effect give him the Lye? He tells you he is *the author of eternal salvation to those that obey him*, and if you refuse obedience to him, and yet pretend you hope to be sav'd by him, can you count this believing

in him? When he would redeem you from your iniquities, and you will not part with them, do you take him for your Redeemer? So that its evident you are not really, and in Gods account, Christians, except you are willing to be guided by Christ to happiness in the way which he hath revealed; wherefore you must see to come up to this, or be reckoned as Heathens and Infidels, and accordingly dealt with: and chuse you whether, if indeed you find any difficult in the choice.

2. Consider seriously *what a kind of design it is that Christ comes to you upon*, and see whether it be not most reasonable you should comply with him. He offers himself to be your Saviour, and what can you say why you should not close with this offer? Examine what hurt there is in that work of Christ upon your Souls, against which you are most prejudiced. He would take off your affections from earthly things that cannot satisfie them, and set them on things above, which will prove a durable portion. He would cure the blindness, brutishness and deadness of your Souls, and raise you to the greatest liberty and freedome of mind, and to the most reasonable excellent life whereof you are capable. He would bring you out of darkness into light, from pain and grief to the most manly joys; he would deliver you out of the noise and tumult of your lusts and passions, and settle you in a sweet and steady place. Instead of being unserviceable to God and Man, and destroyers of your selves, he would make you fruitful and useful in your generation, and your own truest friends. I speak of the present effects of his operation upon your Souls, which would receive an unspeakable advancement, by being freed from the dominion of Sin and Satan, wherein Christ finds you. For certainly to be thus enslaved is the greatest misery that can at present befall you, as it debases and defiles you, and puts you

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out of that order in the Creation which God placed you in. Nothing in all the world can be so much disgrace to you as this: for of reasonable Creatures, you are hereby become like Bruits, yea in some sense worse; and instead of the Image of God, you bear the Image of the Devil, through your love of sin and enmity to holiness. And do you think there is no hurt in all this? No? not in becoming Ideots and Fools, living contrary to, and below your reason? not being like the Devil, whom you cry out upon, and pretend to abhor? Is it no dishonour to you to have him to be your Father whilst you do his works? Well then, I hope you have nothing to say against Christ, who comes to recover you to your selves, to bring you into your right wits, to shew you your former folly, and make you ashamed of, and humbled for it, that you may forsake it: whose design is, to raise you to the priviledge and dignity of your natures, by repairing Gods image upon you which you had lost, bringing you to love that which is best for you, to beware of what would hurt you, and to be weaned from those things that will leave you, and cannot make you happy. And if you have nothing to object against all this, much less can you speak against his intention to keep you from misery, and make you blessed for ever, if you will hearken to him, of which I shall speak by its self. Where then does the matter stick? what can hinder you from coming to Christ, who only calls you to him to take off your load, and lighten your burden, and to give you ease and rest.

3. Consider *what Christ hath undergone in order to the making of your peace with God, on condition of your acceptance of him.* He became poor to make you rich; He became the Son of man that you might be the Sons of God; he came down from heaven to raise you thither; He entred into combate with the Devil that you might

be enabled to conquer him. He bore the worſt the world could do, and overcame all its aſſaults, that you by him might overcome the world. He drank the bitter cup, the dregs whereof you had otherwiſe been drinking eternally. When the ſword of juſtice was even ready to ſheath it ſelf in your bowels, he came betwixt, and received it into his own. He willingly gave up himſelf to the death, that bitter, cruel, ſhameful death, that your Souls might live for ever. He bore your ſins, that they might not lie on you as an heavy load, to ſink you into the loweſt hell. He was made a curſe, that you might eſcape it and obtain a bleſſing. And after all this that he hath done and ſuffered, ſhall he be rejected? Hath he done thus much in order to your deliverance, and ſhall all be loſt as to you, as if it had never been done? What? hath the Son of God, *manifeſt in the fleſh*, ſhed his warmeſt hearts-blood to be as a Balſom for your wounded Souls, and are you not willing it ſhould be applied? Methinks common ingenuity ſhould tell you that ſuch matchleſs love as this ſhould not be ſo ſleighted. If you were taken captive by the *Turks*, and a dear Friend ſhould venture his own life to free you thence, ſure you would be willing to return with him, though you might have great offers to ſtay behind, if it was for nothing elſe but to gratifie your Friend, who had ventured ſo hardly for you, that you might not give him cauſe to repent of his labour. And what? ſhall the blood of Chriſt be as it were ſpilt on the ground, and have no effect on thee? How hard is that Rock whom this will not ſoften? I beſeech thee, Reader, to think what Chriſt hath gone through to deliver thy Soul from the jaws of death, and then think whether it be juſt and reaſonable that he ſhould return without his errand. I know I have mentioned this before, but I ſhall not ſtick to inculcate it

again

again and again, that it may have some force, some power upon thy heart. And to that end, before I leave this Head, let me intreat thee to imagine, that thou saw'st Christ Jesus now before thee all in blood and wounds, calling thee to him as he did *Thomas*, bidding thee to thrust thy hands into his side, and put thy fingers into the print of the Nails, and suppose thou heares him saying to thee, *Look here Sinner, behold these tokens of my love, see what I have endured on thy behalf: oh be not faithless, but believing; be not perverse and obstinate, but willing to come to me, who have felt so much pain to procure thy ease, if thou dost not wilfully refuse it. Cast away those sins which have used me thus; trust thy self with me, who have given such costly evidences of my desire to do thee good; accept me for thy Redeemer, who have paid such a price for thee; own me for thy Lord, who have thus bought thee out of slavery; follow me in the way I shall shew thee, that I may bring thee safe into the presence of the Father, whom I have reconciled to thee:* suppose, I say, thou should'st see Christ even covered over with his own bloud, importuning thee, thus to forsake thy sins, and accept of his grace and mercy, what would'st thou say? what answer would'st thou give? could'st thou find in thy heart to contemn him, to stop thy Ears to his requests, and go away without regarding him? or would'st thou tell him he had not done enough to engage thee to him, and that thou saw'st no reason to hearken to his offers, that thy sins were more sweet and precious than grace and glory, and any thing he would give could possibly be? Surely thou durst not. And if not, then let not thy heart and practice return the same answer to me, who, in the name and stead of Christ, beseech thee, that thou wilt through him be reconciled to God. Even by all those wounds which Christ suffered upon the Cross, by all those pangs and dolours which he felt in his Soul by

he cries and groans; by his tears and blood, I do, as upon my knees, beseech thee to give an hearty entertainment to this Lord Jesus, who was thus bruised and wounded for thy sake. Oh let him in thee *see the travell of his Soul and be satisfied.* No longer cherish those lusts which resist his entrance, off with those Barrers and Bolts that have lockt him out; down with those strong holds that have stood out against him, let the Gates of thy Heart flye open, and let this King of Glory come in; cheerfully, thankfully receive him, and absolutely render up thy self to him, to be disposed of as he shall think fit, only begging that thou maist be taken into the number of his Redeemed Ones, and be enabled to perform the duties enjoyned them, and be fitted to enjoy the priviledges assured to them. This is that faith in Christ which I would so fain perswade and beg thee to, and that by the consideration of what thy Saviour hath endured upon this account, that through faith in him thou mightest be pardoned and saved.

4. Consider, as what bitter things Christ underwent to purchase salvation for thee, if thou reject him not, so, *what a most reasonable condition he hath appointed thee to perform*, that thou mightest obtain salvation by him; even thy unfeigned willingness to accept him for thy Redeemer, and thankfully to receive the benefits which he hath purchast for thee. And will nor this induce thee to enter into Covenant with him, when the terms thereof are so fair and gracious? This thy hearty consent, that Christ shall perform the whole work of a Saviour to thee, and for thee, is the chief thing required to make thee one of his Members. This is the great Command of the Gospel, to Believe in Jesus Christ. So that thou hast nothing to say on thy own behalf, if thou shouldst be found at last to have neglected this duty: for tell me, couldst thou have desired

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any thing more favourable? If thou hadſt been enjoyned ſome great thing, wouldſt thou not have done it? much more now thou art only required to be willing to have Chriſt, and life with him, and all ſhall be thine, wilt thou not be brought to this? But ſtill remember the Offices of Chriſt muſt not be divided, nor his benefits ſeparated: He muſt be taken for thy Lord to rule in thy heart, and govern thy life, as well as for thy Saviour to keep thee from miſery; and thou muſt be as willing to feel in thy Soul the power of his Croſs crucifying thy luſts, as to have the merit of his Croſs procure thy pardon; now thou muſt be brought to the love of heaven above earth, if thou wouldſt be received thither by Chriſt when thou leaveſt the earth. But yet in all this, it is but the conſent of thy Soul which is principally required, in order to the attainment of the offered mercies. And wouldſt thou have matters brought down lower yet? Wouldſt thou be ſaved againſt thy will? And hal'd to heaven, when thy heart is againſt it? Or wouldſt thou have ſuch kind of exceptions as theſe put in with the conditions of thy ſalvation? *That thou maiſt have liberty to trample on Chriſts blood, and yet be waſh'd in it from the guilt of ſin; that thou maiſt have leave to ſerve the Devil, and yet receive from Chriſt the wages he gives his faithful ſervants; that thou maiſt be allowed to love creatures more than God, and yet that God ſhould love thee with his dearſt love; that thou maiſt live without grace, and yet when thou dieſt be received into glory.* Wouldſt thou indeed make ſuch terms as theſe, if it was left to thy own choice? Thou couldſt not ſure be ſo fooliſh, ſo baſely diſingenuous: If not, then come in and ſubmit to thoſe conditions that are now offered thee, than which thou canſt not, if thou beeſt well in thy wits, wiſh for any that ſhould be more ſuited to thy eaſe and intereſt. Hearken then to the free and affectionate invitations of

Christ himself, *ho, every one that thirsteth, let him come to me and drink; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely*, Is. 55.1. Joh. 7.37. Rev. 22.17. Give not Christ cause to complain over thee, that *thou wouldest not come to him that thou mightest have life*; that *he would have gathered thee as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her wings, but thou wouldest not!* Oh what a cutting thought will this be in hell, to remember at what cheap rates thou mightest have escaped that misery, but wouldest not! how easily, how certainly thou mightest have been happy for ever, but thou *wouldest not!* The way was shewn thee, aud thou wast exhorted, and besought again and again to walk in that way, but *wouldest* not hearken, Christ would have been thy Saviour as well as others, but thou *wouldest have none of him*, being in the number of those rebellious ones, who *would not that he should reign over them.* And how utterly inexcusable wilt thou be at the day of accounts, when it shall be askt thee, what reason thou hadst for thy not closing with Christ, when he offered to have saved thee? what answer canst thou then make, except this maygo for an answer, than thou wast fully resolv'd against it? What though thou hadst not wit or learning to improve for Christ, nor an estate to lay out for him, yet hadst thou not a will to embrace him and his tenders? Couldst thou not have loved him, and have given up thy self to him? Could men or Devils, or any thing but thy own wretched obstinacy and perverseness have hindred this? Thou who art now reading this, who hast heard the Gospel again and again, can'st not pretend ignorance: for thou hast been many times informed, and once more let me assure thee, that if thou art willing, Christ is willing; yea he is earnestly desirous of thy happiness, and had rather thou wouldest turn and live, than go on and die: yea, he hath set himself full in the way to prevent thy damnation,

so

ſo that thou canſt not get to hell, but thou muſt tread him under thy feet, who ſtands betwixt to keep thee thence. If now at this very moment thou wilt comply with the deſign of Chriſt, to ſave thee in the way he hath eſtabliſh'd, he will ſurely perform all his promiſes to thee. But beware of deceiving thy ſelf, pretending that thou art willing to have Chriſt, and that thy heart is wholly ſet on him, whilſt yet in thy actions and converſation thou art not ſubject to him: for the tenour of thy life will be ſure to follow the bent of thy heart. If the temptations of Satan do ordinarily prevail with thee againſt the commands of Chriſt, doth not he poſſeſs thy heart, who can thus put thee upon action? If thou followeſt thy pleaſures or worldly buſineſs to the neglect of God's ſervice, is it not plain that thou loveſt the world and thy fleſh more than God and holineſs. Canſt thou be diligent to pleaſe thoſe whom thou hateſt, and to injure and provoke ſuch as thou loveſt beſt? Theſe are too groſs pretences to paſs for current, and thy own conſcience cannot but be convinced of their vanity and falſhood. If thou conſenteſt that Chriſt alone ſhall be thy Saviour, thou wilt depend upon him only for thy ſalvation; if thou art willing he ſhould govern thee, thou wilt in the courſe of thy life yeild obedience to him. If thou ſayſt thou haſt not power to be willing, prethee examine what this means, but that thou art abſolutely unwilling, and then whoſe fault is that? Who is it, I would fain know, hinders thee from being willing? or whom doſt thou think to lay the blame on? Be aſſured the holy God will clear himſelf if thou ſhould'ſt lay the cauſe of thy damnation on him, as if he did not give thee grace enough to change thy heart; ſince thou didſt not improve that meaſure of grace which was given thee, and didſt by thy wilfulneſs keep out what was farther offered to thee: And thou wilt have ſmall

comfort

comfort in laying the fault on the Devil or thy wicked companions; thy accusations of them will be far from acquitting thy self. They shall dearly answer for what they have done, but yet thou wilt still be left liable to justice; yea, thou wilt be found to belye the Devil himself, if thou say'st he was the chief cause of thy ruine; for he could never have deceived and undone thee, if thou hadst not been willing to hearken to him, and be deluded by him. Nor could thy companions have drawn thee to sin, if thou hadst not first been in love with it; for neither they, nor the tempter, whose instruments they were, could thus prevail with them whose hearts were against it. Neither will it excuse thy rejection of Christ, to say thou never hadst sufficient reason given to draw thee to him, and that thou never heardest of any such advantages to be had by him as might allure thee; for thou shalt then be made to acknowledge, that in the thing it self there was reason, abundant reason, for thy acceptance of him. But if it did not prove sufficient to work upon thee, why was this? Was the Gospel unreasonable, or wast not thou unreasonable in slighting it? Was it hid from thee? If so, was it not because thou didst permit the *God of this world to blind thy mind*, and keep thee from the knowledge of the truth? If thou art still in the dark, Is it not because thou *lovest darkness more than light?* Art thou not so fully bent upon the satisfaction of thy Lusts, that thou wilt hear of nothing that should draw thee from them? Art thou not slothful and negligent, and wilt not mind things, nor consider seriously of thy sin or danger, of the love of Christ and thy need of him, and the like subjects; the mediation whereof, through the blessing of God, might have softened thy heart, and bowed thy will to a thorough complyance with the Lord Jesus. And dost thou indeed think that thy wilful affected ignorance

orance ſhall be held as a ſufficient plea for the neglect of thy duty? If, when thou ſett'ſt thy ſervant to work in thy ſhop, he ſhould ſhut up the Door and Windows to keep out the Sun, or by night ſhould purpoſely put out his Candle, and then pretend he could not ſee to do his work, wouldſt thou take this for a good excuſe? And doſt not thou do thus, who wilt not hearken to, or conſider of the word without thee, and putt'ſt out the light of thy Conſcience, that Candle of the Lord within thee, whereby thou mighteſt be led to Chriſt, and then crieſt thou canſt not find the way to him? If a Prince ſhould ſend a Proclamation to Rebels, promiſing pardon to thoſe that would come in, but threatning deſtruction to ſuch as ſhould perſiſt; if they ſtop their Ears when it is read to them, and will not enquire after the Contents of it, will he excuſe them afterwards to ſay, they never heard any invitations to lay down their Arms? Nor, farther, canſt thou truly ſay, that Chriſt required harder things of thee, than this willingneſs of heart to be ſaved by him; for waſt thou once brought to this, whatever elſe he requires from thee would appear eaſie. So far as thy will is made conformable to his, there will appear no more difficulty in obeying his commands, than an hungry man finds in eating, or than a dutiful Child finds in pleaſing a loving Father. To do his will would then be thy great delight, thou wouldeſt find a new nature within thee, carried forth with a mighty power and ſweetneſs to all thoſe acts of obedience that flow from a willing Soul. But yet farther for thy conviction, Suppoſe a Noble-man ſhould offer to a Beggar, that if ſhe would put off her Rags, and waſh her ſelf, and put on the Apparel he had provided, and leave her vagrant life to come and dwell with him, and be his loving and faithful Wife, that then he would marry her, and inſtate her in all his honour and riches: wouldſt

thou

thou ſay there was any thing required of this Woman beſides her willingneſs to become his Wife? I hope, to throw away her rags, and leave her wandring companions, and live like a perſon of honour, does not look like the paying of a Portion, or doing difficult works. And this is the very caſe; poor and naked the Lord Jeſus finds thee, only covered over with rags and filth; theſe he bids thee to ſtrip off, to waſh thee and make thee clean, and put away the evil of thy doings, to renounce thy luſts, to forſake thy ſinful courſes and companions; to put on the white Robes which he hath provided for thee, to be cloathed with his perfect righteouſneſs, that the guilt of thy ſins may not appear; and to be adorned with the graces of his Spirit, that thou mayſt be lovely in the ſight of God, having thus *put on Chriſt*; and he offers to eſpouſe thee to himſelf, and become thy Husband and Head, and make thee a Joynture of Heaven it ſelf, if thou wilt continue in love and faithfulneſs to him all thy days. Where then is the Dowry that muſt be given him? No, he askt for none, 'tis thy ſelf he deſires, and bids thee come boldly without money or price. What eaſier terms, what fairer offers would'ſt thou deſire? Shall I then prevail with thee or not? Even as *Abraham* ſent his Servant to ſeek a Wife for his Son *Iſaac*, ſo do I now addreſs my ſelf to thee from my Lord and Maſter Jeſus Chriſt, earneſtly deſiring *to eſpouſe thee to him as a chaſt Virgin.* With Commiſſion from him I make theſe tenders to thee: Behold this hour a meſſage of infinite concernment and greateſt favour is ſent to thee: Chriſt Jeſus the King of Glory offers himſelf, with all he is and hath, to thee, and by me his Servant thy conſent is now demanded. What anſwer doſt thou give me? Wilt thou be married to him or not? Wilt thou not give me that comfortable anſwer that *Rebeckah* did to *Abraham's* Servant,

vant, *Gen.* 24. 58. *I will go with the man.* Shall I make up the match this day betwixt Christ and thy Soul? If thou sayst No, God that stands over thee will witness, thy own Conscience will witness, yea these very lines shall witness against thee, that Christ did freely offer himself and salvation to thee, and thou didst perversly reject him. But God forbid, thou should'st do thus foolishly: in the bowels of Christ let me beseech thee not to turn the deaf Ear to this message. Do not read these things slightly, as if they concerned thee not; but rather stay a while, and let thy thoughts dwell upon the matter. If there be not all the reason in the world for what I urge thee to, slight it and spare not; but examin things well, and see thou contradict not thy own reason, nor undo thy self by inconsiderateness. Once again then I ask thee, art thou willing to betroth thy self to Christ, forsaking other Lovers that have sued for thy heart? Wilt thou promise to cleave to him at all times, and in all conditions, and through the assistance of Grace, to be faithful and constant in thy love and obedience to thy lives end? If thou say Yea, and art sincere in this resolution, then doubt not but it will be accepted and ratified in Heaven: what thou hast done this hour will be recorded by God himself, and remembred for ever. And do thou make hast to thy private Chamber, there more expresly and solemnly to profess this thy engagement to Christ; and come to the Lord's Table there to seal and confirm this Marriage-Covenant; and let it be thy care all thy dayes to continue stedfast therein, and then doubt not but Christ will perform his part to a tittle.

5. That I may be yet the more likely to bring thee to this saving faith in Christ, which is nothing else but thy consent to be married to him, to receive him for thy Lord and Saviour, as I have before explained it, let me intreat

entreat thee to consider *the advantages thou shalt hereby receive from him.* If thou ask me what these are, I may answer, they are so great that I cannot tell thee; they are such as thou must not, thou canst not fully know till thou art possest of them. He that was perfectly acquainted with them all, might be to all eternity in revealing them; for so long shall the true Christian be in enjoying them. But yet lest thou shouldst think these were but words to draw thee on and deceive thee, know, that I am able out of the Book of God, to tell thee so much of thy gains by Christ, in a line or two, as will certainly bring thee to him, if thou wilt be rul'd by the truest reason, and perswaded to chuse what is best for thee. In one word then be assured, thou shalt have all that may make thee truly happy in this world and the next forever, *Psal.*84.11. 1 *Tim.*4.8. *Rom.*8.28. And what can thy heart wish for more? That very day wherein thy Soul is throughly brought over to Christ, thou hast right by virtue of his rich promise, to all that is in heaven and earth that may be for thy good, and accordingly shall enjoy it, as thou com'st to need it, and art made meet to receive it. So soon as by faith thou art united to Christ, the guilt of all former sins is done away; and for the future thy services shall be accepted, and thine imperfections forgiven: for God is become thy reconciled Father, and will love, own, and bless thee as his Child. And canst thou want any thing who hast God to be thy Father, who owneth all things? yea, who hast him to be thy portion, who is better than all things? All his Attributes, his wisdom, power, truth, and goodness will be engaged on thy behalf, and employ'd for thee; his works, his word, and all providences shall help forward thy happiness. All thy outward affairs, thy heavenly Father, who knows what thou hast need of, will see to and regard; at all times he will so

dispose

diſpoſe of and provide for thee, as ſhall be moſt for thy advantage; no affliction ſhall befall thee, but will prove as Phyſick for thy Soul; in all eſtates and conditions he will be near to thee to direct and preſerve thee, if thou retain thy integrity, ſo that neither Men nor Devils ſhall prevail againſt thee to thy ruine. And the Holy Ghoſt will be thine to enlighten, ſanctifie, guide, and comfort thee, to aſſiſt thee in duties, and to ſeal thee up to everlaſting happineſs. When thou dieſt the Lord Jeſus will receive thy Spirit, and preſerve thee from the roaring Lion, and the Pit of deſtruction: and vouchſafe thee the beginning of happineſs with himſelf, which ſhall be compleated and perfected at the great Reſurrection day, when thou ſhalt be raiſed up by his power, and brought into appearance, not in wrath but in mercy, and ſhalt be publickly owned by that Chriſt, whoſe perſon and cauſe thou didſt here embrace and own; and by him thou ſhalt be openly juſtified from all accuſations of Satan or the Law; and ſhalt be preſented pure and holy into the preſence of the Father, and ſhalt be eternally bleſſed in the enjoyment of all thoſe treaſures of infinite love and goodneſs, which God hath laid up in ſtore for Believers. This is the inheritance which we come to by Chriſt: we are made *heirs of God, yea coheirs with his own Son; we enter upon the joy of our Lord; with him we ſhall abide in the manſions that are in our Fathers houſe.* Then at length we ſhall know all the deſigns of Divine Wiſdom and Love, when they ſhall be accompliſh'd in us and for us: and by the fruition we ſhall underſtand, what is that *exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, for which there were made ſuch wonderful contrivances, ſuch ſolemn preparations, by that God who doth all things like himſelf, being infinitely wiſe and good. Then ſhall we reach to, and find thoſe *glorious things that are ſpoken of the City of God*, yea,

yea those things which it was neither lawful nor possible for Angels or Men to utter. To be short, thou shalt then be advanced to the utmost possible perfection of thy nature; thy Soul shall be fitted for those actions and employments which are most suitable to it, even the loving and praising thy Maker, Saviour, and Sanctifier; and shalt be made capable of tasting the most ravishing, satisfying sweetness and joy in these employments; in pleasing the blessing God, and in feeling thy self encompassed with the warm embraces of his dearest love. And as this thy blessedness shall be infinite and unspeakable, so shall the continuance of it be eternal. Nor shall thy delight be once abated or interrupted through all this eternity, but be ever exalted to the highest pitch; it shall always flow, yea overflow, but never ebb. This is the joy that hath no end, no measures or decay. This is the glory which Christ will give his servants: *not as the world gives, gives he unto them.* *This,* he tells us, *is the will of him that sent him, that every one that sees the Son, and believes on him may have everlasting life.* Joh. 6. 40. *The water which he gives us to drink shall be* in those who partake of it, *a well of water springing up into everlasting life.* And some beginnings of this divine life now, there are brought into the soul, whilst it is made in its measure conformable to God, and is carried out after him with the strong workings of love and desire, and feels the shedding abroad of his love in it self, and lives in the joyful expectations of an advancement to the abundance of life, the perfection of bliss which I before mentioned. And now, Reader, if thou believest all this, which I think thou must needs, except thou take the Gospel for a cheat; if then thou believest it to be true, I would know of thee, whether the invitations Christ makes thee to come to him, be not backt with sufficient motives to prevail with all that are not quite

beſide their wit in matters of their greateſt moment.

By this time I hope thou ſeeſt that thy Redemer ſeeks *thy* intereſt, whilſt he is ſo importunate with thee. What is all for in the reſult but this: That thou would'ſt make thy ſelf bleſſed for ever. This he commands thee, this he beſeeches thee to do. And ſhall ſuch commands be diſobey'd? ſhall ſuch requeſts be denied? Good Lord! How ſtrange a thing is this? That Man, a reaſonable Being, whoſe wiſdom ſets him above all other creatures on Earth, ſhould be thus woo'd, thus call'd upon and intreated to be happy, and yet that he ſhould ſtand dallying and deliberating whether he had beſt be ſo or not; yea, that he ſhould peremptorily refuſe to be ſo. Which ſhould I moſt admire in this caſe, the diſtraction and baſe ingratitude of man, or the inconceivable mercy and patience of God, ſo long to bear with ſuch unworthy creatures, and ſo frequently to renew the offers of bleſſedneſs, and even preſs it upon them? Well then, do'ſt thou think there is any gain in godlineſs? Is there enough to be had with Chriſt to make him and his gifts worth the accepting? For that I tell thee ſtill is all that is expected from thee: be but cordially willing to take him, and all his benefits together, and for certain all ſhall be thine. Thou ſhalt find every promiſe of the book of God made good to thy comfort; yea thou ſhalt find ten thouſand times more than ever thou could'ſt underſtand or conceive from the fulleſt promiſes, the higheſt expreſſions that ever thou met'ſt with concerning the priviledges of Believers. Shall all that is ſaid then bring thee to be one of that number or not? Do'ſt thou know where to make a better bargain for thy ſelf? If ſo, take thy own courſe, and make thy beſt on't: for be aſſured, Jeſus Chriſt needs not thee. His glory doth not ſo depend on thy ſubjection to him that it ſhould be leſſened in caſe of thy diſobedience.

Do thou as thou wilt, he knows how to ſecure his own intereſt: but fain he would perſwade thee to take pity on thy ſelf, and ſave thy own ſoul. If there be any in all the world that hath done more for thee than Chriſt, or that will do more, hearken to him and ſpare not. But before thou conclude there is any ſuch perſon or thing, examine matters well on both ſides, and then do as thou ſeeſt meet. Indeed the caſe is ſo plain, that the verieſt child or fool almoſt may know how to decide it. Bethink thee well what thou art like to have from the world, from thy luſts, from the ſervice of the Devil, or from any thing that would keep thee from Chriſt. Canſt thou think that the ſatisfying of thy ſenſes with what they call for, or pleaſing thy fancy with things ſuperfluous, or living in idleneſs and wantonneſs, in pride and pomp with the applauſe of the world, is any or all of this better than the love of God, better than the fulneſs of joy to be had in his preſence, or better than the rivers of pleaſure at his right hand for evermore? But be they as good as they will, doſt thou think they will always laſt? Or hath the Devil any future reward for his ſervants, when their miſerable ſlavery in this life is ended? Amongſt all his temptations, did he ever ſo much as once bear thee in hand, that he would make thee happy for ever? Is it poſſible for thee to be ignorant, that the *pleaſures of ſin*, beſides their emptineſs and baſeneſs, are but *for a ſeaſon?* So that if thou remain without Chriſt, thou haſt no whither to go, nothing to truſt to, that will not miſerably fail thy expectations. Look round about thee, and ſee if thou canſt find any other foundation to build upon, to raiſe an happineſs to thy ſelf. And when thou haſt but conſidered a while, with that ſerioufneſs that beſeems one who hath a deſire to do himſelf good, I doubt not but the language of thy ſoul will be like that of *Peter* to Chriſt, *Joh. 6. 66.*

Lord,

Lord, whither ſhall I go? thou only haſt the words of eternal life. Thou only haſt revealed it, thou alone directeſt to it, thou only haſt purchaſt it, thou only haſt promiſed it, and thou alone canſt beſtow it upon thy people: wherefore to thee, Lord, I betake my ſelf, renouncing all things that ſtand in competition with thee; be thou my Lord, let me be thy ſervant; let me live to thee here, and let me live with thee for ever hereafter, partaking of that glory which thou haſt obtained of the Father for thy faithful ones. What ſaiſt thou? Does thy very heart agree to theſe words or not? Say yea or no before thou goeſt any farther. I am ſure thou haſt nothing like reaſon to give, why it ſhould not. Oh give not Chriſt cauſe to wonder at thy obſtinacy and unbelief, who when he came to bring thee ſalvation, was rejected. Once again, I aſſure thee, he comes not to undo thee. Think not thou ſhalt loſe by him, becauſe he calls thee to mortification, ſelf-denial, and bearing the Croſs. If he would take thee from any thing which is dear to thee, 'tis onely becauſe it is hurtful: and hee'l give thee better delights, more noble employments than thoſe he calls thee off from. Thou ſhalt part with nothing by his ſervice which thou could'ſt have kept long, and inſtead of it thou ſhalt receive a treaſure that ſhall never be taken from thee. But if thou art ſo faſt bound to thy profits, thy pleaſures and thy ſweet ſins, to which thou haſt been long accuſtomed, that thou wilt not be perſwaded to take thy love off them, and ſet it on Chriſt, but art ſo ſwallowed up with them, that thou turneſt the deaf ear to all theſe intreaties; if this be thy reſolution, that *Baal* ſhall be thy God, and him thou wilt worſhip, that the world ſhall be thy portion, and to it thou wilt cleave, that ſin ſhall be thy trade, and in it thou will live: Remember then thou hadſt thy choice: Chriſt tendered himſelf and all his ſaving mercies to thee, but thou didſt deli-

berately prefer other things before him, and therefore thou haſt no wrong done thee if thou goeſt without him. If this be thy thanks to him for his matchleſs condeſcenſion in inviting thee to glory, grudg not if hereafter he exclude thee from it. And now get thee to thy Idols, which have ſo taken up thy heart, that there was no room for Chriſt, except he would have the leavings of the world and fleſh, which, be it known to thee he never will, hee'l have the higheſt place or none, and ſince he muſt not have that, go thy way I ſay, and make the beſt of thy Idols, thy riches, thy bravery, thy carnal joys, and empty honours, thy dear friends and pleaſant companions; ſuck all the ſweetneſs they will yeild, and keep them as long as thou canſt: and when thou ſeeſt where they leave thee, and what thou haſt brought thy ſelf to, then let thy Conſcience reflect, whether once thou hadſt an offer worth the acceptance.

6. But this brings me to the ſixth and laſt argument to prevail with thee to give up thy ſelf to Chriſt, and that is *the ſad and doleful effects that are like to follow upon thy rejection of him.* If God be juſt and true, thou art not like to go ſmoothly away with the guilt of this hainous ſin. Something to this purpoſe I mentioned before, and therefore ſhall be the briefer now, onely in faithfulneſs and love to thy immortal ſoul, that thou may'ſt never be able to ſay but that thou had'ſt fair warning given thee, I now come to tell thee, that if thou ſtandeſt out againſt the mercy that's ſo freely held forth to thee, refuſing to receive thy Saviour on thoſe terms, and to thoſe purpoſes for which he demands acceptance, thou art then like to be as miſerable, a forlorn, undone creature, both Body and Soul, as ever trod upon the earth, or ſaw the Sun. Make as light of theſe threatnings now as thou wilt, but if there be a God in Heaven, be aſſured they will be made good upon thee, as ſhortly thou

wilt

wilt feel to thy everlasting sorrow, if thy speedy conversion do not prevent it. Think not I take any delight to dig in the bowels of hell, and throw flashes of fire in thy face, meerly to terrifie and daunt thee: no, but I would fain, if possible, prevent thy misery, by discovering what it's like to be, if thou throw thy self headlong into it. And oh that I could speak any thing that might make some impression upon thee, not onely to bring thee to a fright, and there leave thee, but a little to awake thee to a sense what a mischievous thing that sin is, which now thou art so deeply in love with, that thou may'st see to get thy hands rid of it, before it be too late thou wish thou had'st done so! Even during this present life, whilst thou art without Christ, thy condition is most sad, however thou may'st applaud and bless thy self in thy worldly enjoyments. For thou art this while under the load of thy Original sin, and all the transgressions which thou hast actually committed in thought, word, or deed, since thou camest into the world; the least of which, without pardoning mercy, would drown thee in perdition. Thou hast no certainty for an hour of any of those things which thou possessest, but art liable to as short warning as the rich Fool in the Gospel, who was call'd away in that night, wherein he bid his Soul take its ease, eat, drink, and be merry. For thou canst not shew any true title, by virtue of a promise from God, to the least of all thy comforts: But thou standest always exposed to that wrath which thou art treasuring up for thy self against the day of wrath. Thou liest wholly at his mercy whom thou art daily provoking to fury. In all thy ways which are so defiled, the holy God beholds thee in anger, and even loaths thee for thy filthiness. And he alone knows how short a while he is determined to wait on thee: thy Glass is running, his patience is expiring, Death and Judgment are ha-

sting, hell is ready burning, and thou canst not promise thy self a moments safety. Whilst thou art sleeping or waking, eating or working, talking and laughing, the heavy doom hangs over thy head, and thou hast every day reason to expect the dreadful vengeance of the Lord to seize upon thee: nothing but meer mercy hath kept it off this while, which will not always last. At night when thou goest to bed, its a great hazard but thou mayst awake in flames, and never more see the comfortable light; or when thou goest out of doors, its a question whether thou mayst not with *Judas*, go to thy own place, the infernal Mansions, before thou returnest home. For ought I know, or thou either, this may be the last Book that ever thou mayst read, this may be the last warning that ever thou mayst have. Think a little whether this be a comfortable case for a man to continue in, and what wise people they are that venture all upon a Repentance hereafter. Moreover in all the troubles thou mayst meet with in the world, I know not what support, what comfort can be administred to thee: for there's none to be given thee from God, I am sure, whilst thou art a resolved enemy to him. What shift thou makest to get a little ease and relief at such a time I cannot but wonder: only the remnants of thy carnal comforts, and the hopes thou hast of seeing things better, its like may help thee to some false peace. But alas poor man, Death will shortly arrest thee; Death that will strip thee of all that thy heart delighted and trusted in; Death that will break the neck of all thy fond hopes, and utterly frustrate thy expectations; Death that will carry thee out of this beloved world into a place, to which thou hast been a meer stranger, not thinking of it at all, or but coldly and seldom, or with horrour and averseness; this Death, I say, will shortly lay hold on thee, and then whether wilt thou look for comfort,

comfort, who art a ſtranger to God and Jeſus Chriſt? Into whoſe hands wilt thou commend thy departing ſoul, who would'ſt not whilſt thou waſt living, reſign thy ſelf to the God who made thee, and bought thee with his Son's blood? Canſt thou expect Chriſt ſhould now receive thee, who would'ſt not be perſwaded to receive him? What? receive a Rebel into the Kingdom of peace? A filthy Swine into the communion of Saints? No, never expect it. And if he will not receive thee, who muſt? If heaven may not hold thee, what place will? Thou canſt eaſily anſwer theſe queſtions. And when by a reſurrection to condemnation, thou art made with all the reſt, to ſtand in the preſence of thy Judge, how wilt thou then appear before him? For the Lord's ſake, yea for thy own ſake, poor ſinner, thou that canſt not be brought to like Chriſt, nor his holy Laws and ways, nor the ſanctifying work of his holy Spirit, put theſe queſtions, as thou readeſt them, cloſe to thy heart. What wilt thou then ſay to Jeſus Chriſt for this thy contempt, and diſlike of his perſon and government? Dareſt thou then juſtifie thy unbelief and impenitence, when he calls thee to anſwer for it? Or who wilt thou get to plead for thee, when the only Advocate ſhall condemn thee? Who wilt thou make thy friend, when he, who alone could, and would have been ſo, is, through thy own fault, become thy greateſt Enemy? Dare Angels or Saints ſpeak a word for him againſt whom their Lord ſhall ſpeak? Or would they if they durſt? No, they will approve his righteous ſentence. Will the Devil take thy part doſt thou think? Hath he any power there to ſecure his followers? why it's he that is thy accuſer, and if need be, would rather aggravate theſe faults which he drew thee to. Wilt thou then hit him in the teeth with the large promiſes he made thee, and call on him to make them good? Alas, hee'l but laugh

at thee, and ſcorn thee, and make thee acknowledge, that moſt juſtly are all they ſerved, who would truſt to the Devil's deluſions rather than to God's promiſes. Or doſt thou expect relief from thy companions in torment? Ah poor creatures! they would rather help themſelves if they could, but cannot: Oh then! with what an heart, with what a countenance wilt thou hear that laſt doleful ſentence, *Depart from me ye curſed!* when thou ſhalt look round about, and ſee no help, no hope, but that down thou muſt lie in that burning Lake, *which the breath of the Lord's fury like a ſtream of Brimſtone doth kindle*, what a poſture will thy Soul be in? I can tremble to conceive it, eaſier than I can expreſs it. And when thou haſt lain ſome thouſands of years in that place of torments, what then will the workings of thy heart be? when thou haſt felt that *tribulation and anguiſh which comes upon thoſe that work evill*, what thoughts wilt thou have of the ways that brought thee thither? what would'ſt thou not do for the leaſt dram of hope in that miſerable deſpairing ſtate, for the leaſt glimmering of light in that gloomy darkneſs? But there is none to be had, no nor ever will through a whole eternity: the force of which word *eternity*, and the meaning of *Hell*, is now known and felt in another manner, than when careleſs ſinners could laugh at the mention of them, or ſleep whilſt they were preach'd on. But what? canſt thou not perſwade thy ſelf that there are any ſuch torments prepared for unbelievers? If not, it's to be feared thou art one of thoſe unbelievers for whom they are prepared: But if Scripture may convince thee, read amongſt other places, 1 *Theſ.* 1. 8, 9. *Matt.* 25. 46. *John* 3. 36. and then tell me thy judgment. Now indeed all this is but talk; Hell's out of ſight, and the moſt terrible words are but wind: and therefore it is there is ſo little care in the world to make ſure of his favour, who can ſave them

them from this misery, which, because it's neither seen nor felt, is slighted and forgotten. Should a King take a company of men out of prison, who had committed some fault worthy of death, and offer pardon to those that would be sorry for their crime, and promise never to be guilty of the like, but threaten Death to those that would not; and withall should shew them pardons ready sealed, and great hopes of money to be given to the penitent, but racks and gibbets, and fires ready kindled, for the execution of the obstinate: Do you think this would not easily prevail with them, when they saw in good earnest what was like to betide them? And if Christ would take this course, and shew Heaven and Hell, if that were possible, plainly to their eye-sight, its like the most stubborn sinners would be awakened: but he will not do thus, nor is there any reason he should. Since we are made men to be ruled by reason, why should he deal with us like Brutes that must be led by their Senses? yet because he will not take this way with them, brutish sinners disregard him, as if they needed him not. But ah Sirs! all you that could see no need of Christ, when he was so urged, and prest upon you, when shortly you shall see all the world stand before him, and shall behold the devouring flames, into which all they must be cast, who have not a part in his love, then you will see what benefit comes by Christ, then you will no longer count them Fools, that took it for their greatest business to get an interest in him. Then, if the most passionate wishes, that you had been so wise, would do you any good, if the loudest roarings, and bittrest cries for mercy might prevail, you would think them all well spent: but alas, all will be to no purpose. Cry *Lord, Lord*, with never so much noise and earnestness, if thou wast here *a worker of iniquity*, no other Answer shalt thou obtain, but, *Depart from me, I know thee not*. And

thou

thou thy ſelf ſhalt be forced to acknowledge, that this Sentence is as juſt as terrible. For did'ſt thou not here bid Chriſt to *depart from thee, thou deſired'ſt not the knowledge of his ways?* and is it not juſt he ſhould then command thee to Depart from him, as one he will not know nor own? Heaven thou did'ſt refuſe, ſince it was to be had on no other terms than ſubmiſſion to Chriſt; and therefore thou muſt needs fall into Hell, ſince there is no third place provided. But perhaps thou wilt flatter thy ſelf with a conceit that none of theſe things ſhall come upon thee, in that, as thou pretendeſt, thou putt'ſt thy whole truſt in God that he'll ſave thee, and relieſt upon thy Saviour Jeſus Chriſt alone, to be kept by him from hell, and the power of the Devil. But beware, I beſeech thee, how thou cheateſt thy Soul into that miſery, whence no trick or wile can ever fetch thee. Do'ſt thou put thy truſt in God he'll take thee to heaven when thou dieſt, who now alloweſt thy ſelf in thoſe very ſins for which he hath threatned to turn men into hell? If indeed thou doſt ſo, then I hope it is ſome promiſe of his that thou bottom'ſt thy truſt upon, or elſe it is a vain confidence: now ſhew me, if thou canſt, one promiſe in the whole book of God, that gives thee the leaſt ground to hope for happineſs, whilſt thou continueſt in an unregenerate natural eſtate, in love with thy ſins; take thy Bible, and turn it over from one end to the other, and ſee if thou canſt find any ſuch place: but I could ſhew thee an hundred Texts, where wrath is threatned to all unconverted Sinners, continuing ſuch. So that in plain Engliſh, thy truſt in God is no more than a wretched preſumption, that he will be ſo merciful as to break his word to ſave thee; and if indeed this word prove falſe, then thy confidence will not deceive thee; but if it prove true, as for certain it will, then woe be to thee, for all this pretended truſt.

And

And of the very ſame ſtamp is thy reliance on Chriſt whilſt thou rebelleſt againſt him. For tell me, prethee, does the Goſpel ſay, *that every man who ſhall believe that Chriſt will ſave him, ſhall be ſaved by him, let his heart and life be what it will.* I am ſure neither Chriſt nor his Apoſtles ever made known ſuch a doctrine: and if thy faith be grounded upon any other Goſpel than Chriſt hath revealed, thou art like to go ſeek another Heaven than that he hath promiſed. For he hath told thee plainly, that *without holineſs* thou ſhalt *never ſee the Lord*; that he is the *author of Salvation*, only to thoſe *that obey him*; and that he takes off *condemnation* from none but ſuch *who walk not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit.* Now if thou do'ſt truly believe in Chriſt, thou wilt ſet thy ſelf to ſeek for happineſs in the way that he hath appointed, not in one of thy own deviſing: for elſe it is a ſign thou doſt not depend upon him for ſalvation, but on thy own fancy or Satan's deluſions, or whoever it is whoſe directions thou followeſt rather than Chriſts. If thou waſt in a place where two ways meet, and one man ſhould bid thee follow him in this way, and another ſhould bid thee follow him in the contrary way, if thou would'ſt come to thy journeys end: is it not plain that thou believeſt him whom thou followeſt? Or if thou had'ſt ſome dangerous diſeaſe, and an able Phyſician ſhould tell thee, that if thou would'ſt depend upon him, by the help of God he would recover thee, and ſhould leave with thee ſuch and ſuch Phyſick to take; if in the mean time thou ſhould'ſt take a conceit, that thou mighteſt be well without following his advice, and ſome one elſe ſhould direct thee to an eaſier and cheaper way, whereupon thou throweſt away his Medicines, do'ſt thou then depend upon this Phyſician for a cure? Thus the Lord Jeſus, the great Phyſician of Souls, aſſures thee, if thou wilt depend on, and truſt thy ſelf

with

with him, or believe in him, he will keep thee from that everlasting death whereof thou art in danger, and to this purpose he sends his Word and Spirit to cure thee of thy ignorance and wickedness, which is the disease of thy Soul, he would bring thee to Repentance, and thoroughly purifie and sanctifie thy heart: but thou think'st this a tedious course, and wilt by no means submit to it, come on it what will; but fancies't thou may'st be saved without so much ado, and that forsooth by reliance on Christ. Is not this a very wise business, to rely on the Physician for health, and throw away the Physick that should procure it? I know well enough what thou would'st have, Christ shall keep thee from Hell, but yet by all means he must give thee liberty to live in sin; that is, he must let thee carry fire in thy bosome, but yet he must keep thee from being burnt; he must let thee drink poyson, but yet he must keep it from griping thy bowels. But believe it, Christ came not into the world for any such ends. This he hath purchas'd, that no sins, great or small, shall damn that man that's truly humbled for, and forsakes them, and depends upon him for a pardon, and is made holy in heart and life: but not, that he who lives and delights in sin should escape misery, which is indeed a kind of Impossibility. For man is in bondage, and sin is his fetters; now the Son would make us free, he would set the Captive at liberty, but must he not then take off his fetters? We are polluted, sin is our filth, Christ is the fountain opened for our cleansing: and can we be clean if we will not be purged from our filthiness? We are Slaves to Satan through our lusts, by which he leads us whither he will, Christ would deliver us from this slavery, but must he not then break these chains? Sin is the Spawn or Seed, Hell is the fruit and off-spring, and if the Seed be permitted to grow, must there not needs be the fruit? And this

this shews how man plainly destroys himself, whilst he will hug his lusts which are a Serpent in his bosome, presuming that for all that, they will not sting him. Man by his sins had deserved everlasting wrath, Christ came to save him from sin, and so from wrath: and if men will not believe he came to this purpose, or will not improve him in order thereto, must they not needs *die in their sins*, and so *abide under that wrath* which was before upon them, and which still follows after sin, *John* 8.24. and 3.36. *Acts* 4.12. Ignorance of God is one part as well as cause of man's unhappiness, and if men wilfully close their eyes, that the light which Christ brings to the world can have no entrance, must they not of necessity remain in darkness? Excessive love to our Bodies, and to the comforts of this life which we shall be stript of, and want of delight in God, and his holy service, is the great misery of a soul, and doth engage it in those strifes with it's Maker, that cast men into an hell upon earth, and kindle the unquenchable fire: and if they will not give way to the Spirit of Christ, to turn the bent and inclination of their hearts from the World to God, do they not retain their own certain misery? Thus thou seest how impossible it is, even in the thing it self, for all rejecters of Christ to escape damnation, supposing they are but continued in being, and left to themselves; both which, Scripture assures us, will befall the impenitent in the future state. But know moreover, to the breaking of thy heart in time, thy condemnation is like to be much more heavy for thy rejecting of Christ, than it would have been, if he had never come into the world, or had never offered mercy to thee. Canst thou in thy own Conscience think, that thou who hast been so importuned and begg'd by so many arguments, to accept of Christ, shalt escape as easily as they that never heard

of

of him, or but very darkly? Shall not he that abuseth ten Talents be more severely dealt with, than he who hides but one? why else does Christ denounce such woes against *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida*, threatning them with worse punishments than *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*? Was it not because they enjoy'd more mercies, and greater means for Repentance? Do we not read, *Heb.* 12.25. that they *who refuse to hear the Son speaking from heaven, shall much less escape, than they who refused to hear the Prophets of old?* And of a *sorer punishment whereof they are worthy?* Heb. 10.29. Though I would not have thee neglect the means whilst there is any hope, yet let me tell thee, it had been better for thee to have never heard one word of the way to Salvation by Jesus Christ, than having heard, to slight and disregard it. Every Sermon thou hast heard, every Book thou hast read, and every Exhortation thou hast had, and neglected, will sink thee so much the lower into Hell. These very Lines which thou art now reading, if they be not improved, will, without repentance, be remembred to thy smart another day. Be thou well assured, though God be the Father of mercies, and a God of bowels, yet he takes account of the mercies he affords his Creatures, and takes notice how they improve them: and if they be abused, they shall be severely reckoned for. God will not be mocked by rebellious Creatures, nor shall his precious gifts be trod under feet, and they that do such things escape unpunished. Above all then, how will the love of Christ in dying for them make their doom more sad, if they be not *constrained* by this love. What torments can be great enough for the ingratitude and perverseness of such? If thou, Reader, be one of them, I dare appeal to thy self, whether thou deservest not, for thy unbelief and impenitency, greater sufferings than if Christ had never

died.

died. For ſuppoſe there was a Traitor, who for his Treaſon being condemned to die, the King's own Son ſhould be content to have his right hand cut off (to ſatisfie the Law, and terrifie the people from the like guilt hereafter) that he might obtain a pardon of his Father for this poor man; and when he had got it, ſhould come and tell him what he had done, aſſuring him, that if he will but take him for his deliverer, relinquiſh all his traiterous deſigns, and become a good Subject, he ſhall not only have a pardon, but be taken into the Court, and there live in the greateſt favour and honour: but ſuppoſe he, when he hath heard all, inſtead of a thankful acceptance of his pardon upon theſe conditions, ſhould kick at the hand that offers it, and turn his back upon him with contempt, asking him, who wiſh'd him to trouble himſelf for him? Nay, worſe than this, ſuppoſe, whilſt the Prince is holding forth his Pardon, he ſhould endeavour with a Knife that he had got to ſtab him to the heart, would'ſt thou not think that ſuch a Wretch deſerved the greateſt tortures that could be deviſed? And more for this his latter obſtinacy than for his firſt treaſon? And if thou be found guilty of the very ſame, yea worſe perfidiouſneſs and ingratitude againſt God thy Maker, and Jeſus Chriſt thy Redeemer, will not thy own Conſcience conclude it moſt juſt, that the heavieſt judgments ſhould be thy portion? Waſt thou not liable to death, to all kind of miſery for thy ſin? Did not the Son of God humble himſelf to take on him thy nature? and then to die a moſt ſhameful curſed death to purchaſe thy pardon? and yet when he offers it upon condition of thy acceptance of him for thy Saviour, and becoming a faithful Subject to the Soveraign Majeſty, thou art ſo far from being brought to this, that thou rather takeſt encouragement from this mercy held forth by Chriſt in the Goſpel, to continue in diſobedience to

God,

God, than which thou could'ſt not offer a greater injury to thy Saviour, to make him as it were a patron of thy wickedneſs, doing far worſe than they that crucified him, whilſt thou indeavoureſt quite to pervert and take away the end of his Death, which was to *redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie unto himſelf a peculiar people zealous of good works*, Tit. 2. 14. And if indeed this be thy caſe, canſt thou ſay one word in thy own excuſe, why all the plagues that are prepared for rebellious ſinners ſhould not be poured out upon thee, who thus ſcorneſt and abuſeſt thy compaſſionate Saviour?

By this time, I hope, thou art convinced, that there is abundant reaſon why thou ſhouldeſt accept of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to bring thee to the ſalvation he hath prepared for his people, in that way which he himſelf hath preſcribed. That thou mighteſt not want arguments of all ſorts, I have plainly told thee what's like to come of thy obſtinate refuſal. And now after all I again demand of thee, whether thy heart be brought thus thoroughly to conſent, that Chriſt ſhall be thy Saviour, and take his own way with thee, to keep thee from miſery, and bring thee to true bleſſedneſs? Art thou reſolved to give up thy ſelf to him, and follow his directions, or not? Shall all that hath been ſaid, do nothing to incline thee thereto? Do'ſt thou think it better to be commanded to go from Chriſt hereafter, than to come to him at his command for ſalvation here? Canſt thou bear his heavieſt indignation rather than his *eaſie yoke & light burden?* Is there any thing in becoming Chriſt's faithful Servant worſe than being the Devil's everlaſting bond-ſlave? Bethink thy ſelf whilſt thou haſt leiſure, and ceaſe not theſe thoughts 'till thou arriveſt to a true ſenſe of the things that concern thee, and at length art firmly reſolved, without any more baffling or dallying, to bind thy ſelf over to Chriſt by a firm Covenant, to be wholly

his

him, never to depart from him; but in all things ſincerely to comply with him, and be guided by him, that thou mayſt eſcape the vengeance thy ſins have expoſed thee to, and obtain that Glory to which he will aſſuredly bring thee. This is that Covenant with Chriſt, or faith in him, which I have been all this while perſwading thee to: wherein I told thee is contained thy Covenant with God the Father, to love and honour him above all, as thy Maker, Ruler, and End; and with the Holy Ghoſt, to be ſanctified and led by him. Which Covenant every man muſt be cordially entred into, that he may be fit to partake of the Lord's Supper, whereby he doth profeſs to conſecrate himſelf to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt: that is, to be a true Chriſtian, as by his Baptiſm he ſtands engaged. And this is the third qualification which is requiſite to all Communicants. And if I ſhould name no more, hence it may ſufficiently appear who is fit to come to this Ordinance; even he that being acquainted with the Doctrine of the Goſpel concerning Jeſus Chriſt, believes all that is there related to be true, and is ſenſible of, and deeply humbled for all his ſins, being ſtedfaſtly reſolved, by God's aſſiſtance, preſently from this time forward to forſake them, and is unfeignedly willing to receive the Lord Jeſus, to be his Saviour, upon the terms of the Goſpel, that is (as I ſhall next ſpeak particularly) he that relies upon him alone for the pardon of his ſins, and is willing to be ſanctified by his holy Spirit, that he may be made fit for an everlaſting communion with God, upon whom he hath placed his higheſt love. This is the man whom Chriſt will bid welcome to his Table. Wherefore, Reader, if this be a deſcription of the ſtate of thy Soul, let not Satan, or thy own fearful miſgiving heart perſwade thee, that thou art unfit to partake of the priviledges held forth to Believers: but with a cheerful

boldneſs addreſs thy ſelf to this Feaſt, which thy gracious Lord hath appointed for thy refreſhment and ſtrengthening, 'till he take thee to himſelf into his heavenly Kingdome.

Since I have already thus far diſcovered, what kind of perſons Communicants ought to be, from the nature of this Ordinance, as it is for a Remembrance of Chriſt and his Death, which cannot be without the knowledge of him, repentance for ſin, and believing in him, I may therefore be briefer in the particulars that follow, in ſhewing what more is included in Remembring Chriſt at the Sacrament, ſince they ſerve but farther to illuſtrate and confirm what I have already mentioned concerning the qualifications of the Receivers, and ſince I may repeat ſome of them in directing thoſe that intend to Communicate.

CHAP. VI.

IV. *A right Remembring the benefits procured for us by the Death of Chriſt.* 1. *Juſtification.*

HE that remembers Chriſt's death as he ought, *cannot but remember what were the benefits purchaſt by his Death for thoſe that believe in him:* which benefits are held forth and repreſented in the Sacrament, and by it conveyed and aſſured to the worthy Receivers, and do call for ſuitable diſpoſitions and affections in them, as I ſhall ſhew particularly. Of theſe benefits I ſhall name three which are the principal, and contain all the reſt: And theſe are *Juſtification*, *Sanctification*, and *Glorification.*

1. The firſt is *Juſtification* or the *pardon of ſin* (for the difference betwixt them is ſo ſmall, that I ſhall here take

take no notice of it) which pardon Christ hath obtained by the satisfaction he made to divine justice, by his perfect obedience and grievous sufferings, for the sake whereof, Believers are releast from the rigour and curse of the Law, received into the favour of God, and preserved from those miseries which otherwise had acccording to their desert befaln them, *Gal.* 3. 13. *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us.* Heb. 1. 3. *When he had by himself purged our sins, &c.* Heb 9.26. — *But now he hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.* Rom. 3. 23, 24. *For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ*; with multitudes of the like places. And the Bread and Wine set apart for the Sacrament, do represent Christ's Body that was *given* and *broken for us*, Luk. 22. 19. 1 Cor. 11. 24. and his Blood which was shed to procure our pardon, as you may read expresly, *Mat.* 26, 27, 28. *And he took the Cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink ye all of it: For this is my Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins*; that is, this Wine doth signifie and represent my Blood, in which the New Covenant betwixt God and Man is founded and establish'd, and by which remission of sins, and all other consequent benefits of this New Testament or Covenant are purchas'd. And those Sacramental actions of giving and receiving the Bread and Wine to eat and drink it, do hold forth and confirm the mutual Covenant betwixt God and Man. As it seals to the Covenant on Man's part, (that he will receive Christ as he is offered, and be devoted to him, and to God by him,) I have spoken to it under the foregoing Head; and to all who sincerely do thus, God hereby seals to them, that he will be their God, reconciled to them through his Son; and that Christ with

all his benefits ſhall be theirs; and therefore as one principal benefit, that all their iniquities for Chriſt's ſake ſhall be forgiven them. Even as the Miniſter, who is here in God's ſtead, offers them the Bread and Wine, whereby a crucified Chriſt, with the bleſſings he purchas'd, are ſignified, ſo doth God make over all theſe to a believing Soul, which doth as really and truly, though in a ſpiritual manner, receive Jeſus Chriſt, by conſenting to take him for his Lord and Saviour, as with his hand he takes, and with his mouth eats, and drinks the Bread and Wine. Now in anſwer to that particular priviledge, pardon of ſin, which hereby is aſſured to us, there is required in us a dependance upon Chriſt for this pardon; that is, an expectation and hope, that God for his Son's ſake will pardon our ſins, that they ſhall not be charged upon us, to condemn us at the great judgment day, but that we ſhall then be cleared from all accuſations, and ſecured from thoſe miſeries into which the ungodly ſhall be ſentenced; and this we are to look upon as ſealed to us by the Sacrament. And it is to be conſidered, that this dependance upon Chriſt for a pardon, is one part, or an effect of our ſaving faith in him: for they who believe that he is the Redeemer of the world, and are willing to be ſaved by him from their wickedneſs, and ſo from hell, they will rely on him to obtain forgiveneſs by him, and according to the knowledge they have of their Repentance and Faith, the conditions of this mercy, they will the more confidently expect it. But as it is oftentimes difficult to bring the trueſt Believers to this act of Faith, in that meaſure as may give them comfort, ſo it is more difficult to beat the moſt negligent out of this refuge, who would cheat themſelves with a conceit, that to hope for mercy through Chriſt is all that's required of them. But know, the pardon which God offers is upon

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condition of our willingneſs to accept of Chriſt to teach and guide, to ſanctifie and ſave us, which I have oft mentioned, as that believing in Chriſt which the Goſpel calls for, and entails ſalvation upon: and then they in whom this willingneſs is wrought, are bound to believe, that all God's promiſes, made to ſuch as by his Grace they find themſelves to be, ſhall be fulfill'd: and therefore particularly they ought to believe, that according to his promiſe, he will blot out all their tranſgreſſions, for his ſake who was bruiſed for them; and upon the ſtrength or weakneſs of this perſwaſion doth their comfort very much depend, though not their ſafety ſo much, ſince the want of it commonly proceeds from an ignorance of themſelves, rather than an unbelief of the promiſes: to which I ſhall ſay ſomething hereafter, leaſt any ſhould think they muſt not come to the Sacrament, becauſe they have not a confident perſwaſion that their ſins ſhall be pardoned, and therefore think they have no Faith. Now from what hath been ſaid, it farther appears, *That none but penitent Believers are worthy Receivers:* for to ſuch, and none but ſuch, doth God in the Covenant of Grace promiſe pardon, and therefore to them only it is that he conveys and aſſures it by the Sacrament, which is a Seal of that Covenant, and ratifies no more than what that promiſeth. And indeed none but ſuch do in good earneſt deſire or ſeek after a pardon: for none but they are ſoundly convinced of their need of it, by reaſon of their breach of that Law which doth accuſe and condemn them. Ignorant ſenſeleſs ſinners, that run on deſperately in their wicked courſes, without any thought or fear of thoſe judgments that are ready to be executed upon them, and never take to heart how they have incenſed the Divine Majeſty againſt them, do not uſe much to buſie their thoughts how they ſhould turn away this

wrath, and prevent this miſery. The fear of ſickneſs, poverty, diſgrace, or the like temporal evils, doth much more take them up than the fears of Hell, and accordingly their daily care is to avoid thoſe rather than this. He that is ſick prizes the Phyſician, whilſt he that is in health, or thinks he is ſo, cares little for him or his Medicines. A poor priſoner that hath newly heard the ſentence of Condemnation from the Judge's mouth, and knows he's a dead man in Law, what would not he do to get a Pardon from the King? Or oh how thankful would he be to the Man that ſhould do it for him? Whilſt another that knows not himſelf to be guilty (though he may be really ſo) would take himſelf little beholden to any one that ſhould make him ſuch an offer, to wit, of the King's pardon. Even thus ſhould you come to a ſtupid Sinner, and be able to aſſure him that God was reconciled to him, he would be very little moved with the tidings, for this is not a matter whereof he uſed to make much doubt, or greatly concern himſelf one way or other: but could you ſurprize him with the news of a great Eſtate being fallen to him, oh what an extaſie of joy would you caſt the poor man into? I confeſs when theſe careleſs ones come to be awakened on a death-bed, or by a fit of ſickneſs, then they do indeed earneſtly deſire, that their ſins may be forgiven them. Notwithſtanding the great affection they had to the Devil's drudgery, they have no mind to receive the wages which he affords them. Though they have loved ſin ſo well, that they would never part with it whilſt they could keep it, yet ſince now they can keep it no longer, by no means are they willing to go to that Hell to which their ſins directly led them. Loth they are to take leave of their luſts, 'till they come to the very mouth of the Grave, but then fain they would rid their hands of them: for they know, if they go together one

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ſtep farther they are like to rue it for ever. Whilſt they could taſt the pleaſures of ſin they wallowed ſecurely in it, but now ſickneſs hath ſpoil'd their taſt, and put them out of temper, they ſeem ſomewhat more indifferent to it: but eſpecially fearing, leaſt they have already had all the ſweetneſs, and that nothing but bitter dregs are at the bottom of the Cup, therefore now at length they would throw it out of their hand. And this I fear is ordinarily the beſt of a Death-bed Repentance, which many build their hopes ſo much upon. They may be in good earneſt afraid of being damned, and therefore are ſorry that they have brought themſelves into ſuch danger: but what's this to an ingenious ſorrow for having offended a good and gracious God, and to a loathing of ſin for its own vileneſs? which are neceſſary to make our Repentance right. And not onely at death, its like, but in time of health alſo, there are many who would be very willing to have their ſins pardoned, if it might be, upon any other condition than forſaking them. If bare confeſſion and begging of mercy might ſerve turn, or if coming to the Sacrament might ſerve turn, and yet ſtill they might live as they liſt, few would go without a pardon. But remember, God no where aſſures pardon to any man abſolutely, but upon a certain condition, which except we perform, we cannot look for the promiſed mercy. What this condition is, I have before told you, even that you ſhould repent of, and give diligence to forſake all ſin, and receive Chriſt to be your perfect Saviour: upon no other terms therefore expect to have pardon confirmed to you by the Sacrament, which will no farther avail you than as it receives power and efficacy from the promiſe, without which it is a Seal to a blank Paper that will warrant you to claim nothing. Suppoſe a Landlord ſhould make you a Leaſe of an Houſe, upon condition that

you would own your self his Tenant, and yearly pay him some small quit-rent, and should set his Seal to this Lease, all this would stand you in no stead, if you denied that you was his Tenant, and refuse to pay the Rent he required. Wherefore to know whether your hope of pardon be upon good grounds, and such as will not fail you, examine whether you are such kind of persons as I have before described, whether you are humbled for, and brought out of love with every sin, and do with firm purpose of heart cleave to the Lord Jesus.

To bring you thus to depend upon Christ for a pardon, in a right manner, and upon sure grounds, the considerations I laid down under the last particular may be of use, since this is one part of that faith in Christ, which I there exhorted you to; that was an acceptance of him in all his Offices; this hath a peculiar respect to his Priestly Office, and is called *Faith in his blood*, Rom. 3. 25. Onely to adde a word or two more, for the quickning of all such who have not much laid it to heart, how to get their sins pardoned, as if they thought it was a thing of no great consequence: Consider, I beseech you, whether the Incarnation, Life and Death of Christ was not a matter of huge importance to the world? and tell me, Reader, dost not think thou art as much concerned herein as any other man? Had'st not thou as much need of his Death as any? And therefore doth it not stand thee upon, to see whether thou shareſt in the benefits of it as much as it doth any man breathing? And tell me farther, if all this preparation in the Gospel had been made for thee only, and Christ had come down from heaven, and suffered on the Cross for thy sake alone, that thou mightest be saved by him on the same terms that now thou may'st; and should have sent thee a Message, calling thee by thy particular name, assuring thee of all this, and beseeching thee to accept

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of theſe offers of life; doſt thou think all this would have convinced thee of the greatneſs of Divine love, and of thy need of mercy? And would it have awakened thee to make out after the ſame, and to do all that was required to obtain it? If ſo, why then wilt thou not now be perſwaded to the ſame care? Since the Goſpel ſpeaks to thee as particularly as if it named thee; and the mercy is as great, and thy need of it as much as if thou alone waſt concerned in it; and thou ſhalt never have the leſs benefit, nay rather more, by having others to ſhare with thee in it: but thy miſery, if thou miſs of a pardon, will be never the leſs, for having many companions in the ſame ſad caſe with thy ſelf.

Once again let me ask thee, thou who now art ſo inſenſible of thy need of a pardon, that thou wilt not take pains to get it in the way thou art commanded, wouldeſt thou be contented at any rates, abſolutely and expreſly to part with all hopes and expectations of it? If thou migh.'ſt be hired with a thouſand or ten thouſand pounds, would'ſt thou for ſuch a ſum of money, profeſs thou didſt renounce all right and title to Jeſus Chriſt, and all hopes of mercy through him? Or would'ſt thou give this under thy hand in writing to the Devil, or to any man that would help thee to a great Eſtate? what would'ſt thou think of thoſe who ſhould do thus? would'ſt thou not look upon them as moſt wretched forlorn creatures? Why, be it known to thee, if through negligence and ſtupidity thou ſeek not out after an intereſt in Chriſt, that thou mayſt be pardoned and ſaved by him, thy condition will at length be found as miſerable as theirs. If there ſhould be certain acres of ground in *Ireland*, promiſed to any one that would go thither to poſſeſs them, he that would not take the pains to go over, would have no more advantage by them

them, than he that ſhould formally renounce his right thereto: even ſo by careleſneſs and ſloth mayſt thou loſe all benefit by Chriſt, as certainly as thoſe poor creatures that are drawn to make compacts with the Devil, and ſell away their Souls for a thing of nought.

To conclude, if nothing I have hitherto ſaid will move thee, conſider, I entreat thee, whether this thy undervaluing of pardoning mercy will remain always. Sins thou haſt, I know thou wilt acknowledge, yea, many and great ſins, ſuch as would ſink thee to the loweſt hell if they be laid to thy charge. Do'ſt thou not grant this? And thou canſt not but know, that there will at length come a day of reckoning for theſe thy ſins: and doſt thou think when thou muſt ſtand before the Judge, and give up thy account, that thou ſhalt not earneſtly deſire a pardon then? will it then ſeem as indifferent a thing as now it does? Then, I ſay, when without it thou muſt be ſentenced to keep company with the Devils, in the midſt of ſchorching flames, for ever and ever. And thou canſt not ſure be ſo ignorant as not to know, that none ſhall have a pardon *then* but thoſe who got it *now*: that's a day for examining, and declaring what our eſtates are, whether good or bad, that we may be dealt with accordingly, not a time for getting them made better, if they were nought before. Wherefore if thou beeſt not a very Brute, only to mind what is before thee; if thou haſt any foreſight, any belief of this Judgment-day that thou art going to, now rouze up thy ſelf, and with all ſpeed and induſtry labour to get that pardon, which within a while, to thy own moſt lively ſenſe will be ſo needful, and ſtand thee in ſo much ſtead. And when thou art wrought to ſuch a ſight of thy miſery as makes thee deſire after mercy, and to ſuch a loathing of thy ſins as fits thee for it, then thou may'ſt be aſſured, that God for Chriſt's ſake will be

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gracious to thee, and thou mayst comfortably address thy self to the Sacrament, and take it as a farther assurance from God, that his promises of mercy shall be made good to thee.

CHAP. VII.

The second benefit is Sanctification.

2. THE second great benefit purchas'd by the Death of Christ, and held forth in the Sacrament, is *Sanctifying*, *Saving Grace*, for the enlivening and strengthening the Souls of Believers. There is no truth more plain in the whole Gospel, than that one great end of Christ's Death was, to obtain from the Father, that the holy Spirit should accompany the proclaiming of the Gospel, to enlighten the minds and soften the hearts of those who should not wilfully resist his workings, that they might entertain the *truth in the love thereof*; and that on these, greater measures of grace should be poured forth, to make them in all things conformable to their Maker, according to the capacity of their natures: which was the great design of the Redeemer, even to restore Apostate creatures to the image of God wherein they were created, that so they might be made meet for his service here, and the fruition of him hereafter. A most lamentable mistake it is to confine Christ's death only to the procuring of a pardon, and keeping sinners out of Hell, since this was but in order to a work of grace on their hearts, and only such who submit to this work shall at last have a share in the absolute pardon. For suppose a company of Prisoners were taken in War, who being weak and wounded, cannot return into their own Country, but must presently

ſently be put to death by the King that took them; and in the mean time comes their own Prince, and pays a great ſum to obtain, that the execution of them may be put off for ſome time, and that his Phyſician may uſe medicines, and apply plaiſters to as many as are willing, and that all ſuch, when they are made whole, ſhall be ſent to their own homes: and the reſt who will not be ruled by the Phyſician, but ſpit out his potions, becauſe they are bitter, and throw away his plaiſters, becauſe they make them ſmart, they are to remain in their priſon, and be put to death as they were ſentenced. Here we ſee the ranſom that was paid, was firſt to ſtop the ſlaughter of the priſoners, and to get liberty to uſe means for their recovery to health and ſoundneſs; and ſecondly to obtain, that the recovered ſhould be ſet free to return to their own countrey; and not onely the contempt of the ranſome, but of the Phyſician, would bring Death. Thus had we by the Fall, both brought our ſelves into danger of preſent deſtruction, and diſabled our Souls, that we could not return to that ſtate whence we fell; but the Sun of God undertaking our Redemption, obtained for us, that the ſentence of condemnation ſhould not ſpeedily be executed, and that there ſhould be aſſured hopes of eſcaping deſtruction; and returning to happineſs, for all thoſe who make not their condition deſperate, by continuance in ſin, and rejecting of the cure which his Spirit would work upon them: now the work of his Spirit is to plant and increaſe grace in their hearts, to heal the diſeaſes, and remove the weakneſs which ſin hath cauſed, that they may be enabled to walk in the ways of holineſs to their everlaſting reſt: and the ſending forth of his healing Spirit was the fruit of his blood: Now as it will aſſuredly damn men to deſpiſe the blood of Chriſt, as if it was of no force to be a ranſom, nor to attain thoſe

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ends for which the Gospel saith it was shed, so is it as dangerous and damnable to resist and slight the Spirit of Christ, let them pretend what esteem they will for his blood. A like mistake also it is, flowing from the former, to limit the notion of *free grace* to meer pardoning mercy, when as it includes sanctifying Grace also: for in the instance now given, the Physick I hope was as free a gift to the prisoners, as the ransome that was paid for them, notwithstanding this was without them, and the other to be taken into them. And in like manner is the giving of the Spirit into us, as purely from the grace and mercy of God (though merited by Christ) as the giving of his Son for us, & accepting of us for his sake. This I was willing to hint, least any when they hear or read of being saved by *Free grace*, should dream of a Salvation to be had by a meer pardon, without being sanctified by the Spirit.

That the making men holy in their hearts and lives was a principal end of Christ's Death, without which no happiness is to be attained, is, I say, a truth so evident in the very tenour of the Gospel, that it may seem needless to produce particular proofs; yet amongst the rest read these few, *Eph.* 2. 10. *We are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works*, &c. *Eph.* 5. 25. 26, 27.—*Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctifie and cleanse it*, &c. *and that it might be holy and without blemish.* 1 Joh. 3. 8. *The Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the Devil.* 1 Pet. 3. 24. *Who bare our sins—that we being dead to sin should live unto righteousness.* Tit. 3. 4, 5, 6. —*According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.* Read also *Matth.* 1. 22. *Luk.* 1. 7, 5. *Rom.* 6. 11. *Gal.* 1. 4. *Tit.* 2. 12, 13, 14. *Heb.* 9. 14. Now though I acknowledge it is by the help of the Spirit, that we are brought to be-

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lieve: for *faith it self is the gift of God*; Eph. 2. 8. yet I think we shall ordinarily find the promises of the Spirit to be made to those who are already Believers, to advance and carry on the work of God upon their Souls. And to this end, and of this nature is that Grace which is signified and given forth by the Sacrament; even to refresh and nourish the Souls of Believers, to confirm and increase those graces that are wrought in them, and to bring them forward to farther degrees of perfection. And thus much the very Elements themselves do teach us: for as Bread is the support and stay of life, and Wine that which makes glad the heart of man, and both are needful for the maintaining of life, and increasing our strength, so are the Body and Blood of Christ alike necessary and useful to our Souls: for he himself hath told us, that his *flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed, and that he who eats his flesh and drinks his blood dwelleth in him, and hath eternal life*, with much more to the same purpose, *John 6.* The proper meaning whereof, as will appear by the Context, and the occasion of that Discourse, I suppose, is, That they who believe in him, having the same expectations of spiritual life from him, that they have of temporal life from their food, and accordingly receive, digest, and improve his doctrine, hoping for remission of sins through his Blood, giving entertainment to his Spirit, and are filled and fed with those graces which he gives out, that all such shall live for ever. And then in a secondary sense, these words may be applied to the Sacrament; so far as this faith in Christ, whereby grace is expected and derived from him, is here particularly acted: for thus he who in the Sacrament eats the flesh and drinks the blood of Christ hath eternal life; that is, he who comes with that fitness of Soul as to be made partaker of the blessings and mercies hereby presented,

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and earneſtly deſires, that of Chriſt's fulneſs he may receive ſuitable ſupplies of Grace. To the ſame purpoſe ſeems the Apoſtle to ſpeak, 1 *Cor.* 10. 16, 17. *The Cup of bleſſing which we bleſs, is it not the communion of the blood of Chriſt? and the Bread which we break is it not the Communion of the body of Chriſt? For we being many members are one body.* As if he ſhould have ſaid, Hereby we have a communion with Chriſt himſelf, we profeſs our relation to, and intereſt in him; and the benefits which come by him are communicated to us who truly believe in him; his Spirit is diffuſed and ſhed abroad upon us, and thereby we, who make up one myſtical body, whereof he is the Head, being united and ingrafted into him, as members do live by him, being acted and upheld by that life and vigour which he gives and continues to us.

Since then here is ſpiritual food, ſanctifying Grace held forth and communicated to Souls rightly diſpoſed, this farther informs us what kind of perſons Communicants ought to be. The diſpoſitions of Souls particularly ſuited to this benefit are, 1. *An earneſt deſire after grace to be given in*, and 2. *A reſolution to improve this grace received.* Hither Chriſtians are to come, earneſtly longing to have communion with Chriſt himſelf, who is not onely the Maſter of the Feaſt, but the very food whereupon the Believer lives; and this communion we have by his liberal communications of the graces of his Spirit to neceſſitous Souls. This deſire of grace is that which is ſignified by thoſe expreſſions of *hungring* and *thirſting*; which we ſo often meet with in Scripture; anſwerable to which the Spiritual things deſired are repreſented by things to be eaten and drank, as by Bread, Meat, Milk, Water, and Wine. And they are here ſhadowed forth under the Elements of Bread and Wine, and muſt be hungred after by all that come to

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this Ordinance: which teacheth us, *that none are fit to come, who have not already received such beginnings of grace, as may cause them to long for more*; who have not such a spiritual life wrought in them, as may put them upon care to have this life supported and increas'd. None can feel hunger but they that live; none can desire after greater measures of Grace, who have not in some sort known and tasted the sweetness and excellency thereof. But no humble Souls need therefore be discouraged, as if they were not worthy to feast at this Table, where none are welcome but such as have true Grace wrought in them, since they may be confident of their acceptance, if they can really find in themselves an appetite to the provisions made for them, an hearty and *sincere* desire, that their Spiritual wants may be supplied, their weakness strengthened, and all their distempers healed: and what true Christian, whose Grace is never so low, but finds in himself a love to, and a longing after more? But this indeed condemns those who feel no need of any nourishment for their Souls, and therefore either wholly neglect Sacraments, and other means whereby it is to be had, or else come without any stomach at all, and content themselves with the shell and outside of the duty, which will never feed them. These full Souls, that loath the Honey-combe are like to be sent empty away, whilst the hungry only shall be filled with good things. Now to such sickly, listless Souls, that even nauseate the most wholsome food, I would say something briefly in order to their cure, to bring them so far into frame that they may come with quickned appetites, and enlarged desires to the Lord's Table, as perceiving there are such good things here to be had, which they do most of all stand in need of.

1. In order hereto, labour to *get sensible what needy empty*

empty creatures you are: for 'till then you are not like to ſeek out for a ſupply. Conſider, I mean, chiefly how deſtitute you are by nature, and to this very day, of that which is the true riches, the beauty and dignity of the Soul, in that you are ſo unlike to God, ſo full of corruption and wickedneſs, ſo empty of that Spiritual wiſdome, that holineſs, humility, heavenly-mindedneſs, and the like excellencies, which alone can render you amiable in the ſight of your Maker. You cannot imagine, if you have well ſtudied your own hearts, that you brought into the world with you, all that Grace which is of abſolute neceſſity, to perfect and accompliſh your Natures; and it is too ſad a ſign you are ſtill without it, whilſt you have no more mind to thoſe means which God hath ordained for the conveyance and increaſe of it. How happy a thing now was it, if you were but throughly convinced of your own wants? when you do but perceive you need food, or rayment, or phyſick, how induſtrious and impatient are you 'till you have one way or other got what you would have? And thus ardently deſirous would you be after the Graces of God's Spirit, if you did rightly apprehend, that theſe are the food, and cloathing, and phyſick of the Soul. But alas, how do people generally labour under the ſottiſhneſs, and ſelf-conceitedneſs, which was charged upon the *Laodicean* Church, that *thought her ſelf rich, increas'd with goods, needing nothing, and knew not that ſhe was wretched and miſerable, poor & blind, and naked*, Rev. 3. 17. 'Tis one of the greateſt difficulties in the world to bring men to judge of their poverty or riches by the temper and frame of their Souls; to convince them that they are poor and needy, whilſt they are graceleſs, though they ſhould overflow in wealth and abundance of all external things.

2. Wherefore in the next place, let me adviſe you

to beware of a ſecret miſtake which ruins millions, in imagining that outward comforts may ſerve well enough to make amends for all your neceſſities; that the husks of worldly enjoyments may ſerve inſtead of the Bread that is in the Fathers houſe. Oh take heed of inordinate thirſting after theſe puddels, or of wallowing in them. Doe not ſo eagerly purſue ſuch unſatisfactory trifles as carnal profits and pleaſures, which divert you from the purſuit of thoſe things that moſt concern you; but examine well what there is in them to do good to an immortal Soul, which you cannot but account your beſt part. Beware then of being ſo devoted to the pleaſing of your fleſh, that you ſhould be thereby ſtupified to a regardleſneſs of your Soul. The luſcious fare which the world affords, cloys the mind of man, and ſpoils his appetite, and puts him out of reliſh with his own moſt proper food. This is the undoing of the moſt, they are ſo full of the Creature, if not in their hands, yet in their hearts, that they have no mind nor room, to entertain any thing of God there. Every man breathing finds himſelf a needy Creature, that cannot live upon himſelf, but muſt have ſomething from without brought in to give him ſatisfaction: but then the miſery is, they think their wants are all of that nature, that things here below may ſupply them. The poor think there is nothing they need ſo much as better food and raiment, more plenty and eaſe and eſteem in the world; and they who abound in theſe things, becauſe they ſee others excell them, think they want ſuch and ſuch greater Eſtates and Dignities to make them happy. Though they find after all their attainments, that ſtill they are reſtleſs, diſcontented, and wanting ſomething elſe, they ſcarce know what: which might convince them, that it is onely from God they can receive ſatisfaction, by having their natures perfected with thoſe Graces which may fit them for that communion

communion with him in love and delight, wherein the Soul of man can onely find reſt and contentment. This, I ſay, they might learn from thoſe reſtleſs infinite deſires of their own hearts, if they would but heedfully attend to the nature thereof: but being more cruel to themſelves than any Parent to his Child, when the Soul calls for Bread, they give it a Stone: endeavouring to put it off with thoſe things that concern the body alone, whilſt that within them, which is moſt needy, ſtill remains ſo, and is ſuffered to pine and ſtarve. As if an hungry man ſhould fill his mouth with meat, and let nothing down into his Stomach. Whilſt you are fondly endevouring to quiet your minds, and accompliſh your ſelves with any thing that is without your Souls, be it riches, pleaſures, honours, friends, and all the accommodations of the outward man, which the World moſt dotes upon, you are as verily beſotted and deceived, as he that thinks to eaſe a violent pain at his heart with putting on a rich Suit of Clothes; or to ſupply the want of enlivening blood and ſpirits by painting his face. Your neceſſities and diſeaſes are deep and inward; your very Souls are out of order, and nothing in the World will do you any good, but what gets within you, and changes your apprehenſions, deſires and affections, and makes you quite other perſons than now you are. Wherefore I would beg you to fix this truth deep into your minds, *That ſince you are become poor and naked through the loſs of God's Image, which was the riches and beauty of the reaſonable creature, it's never like to be well with you, till you be again reſtored to his Image: which is by being brought to the knowledge and love of him, to an univerſal ſubmiſſion, and exact conformity to his will.*

3. And when you are brought to this knowledge of your wants, and the nature of them, then conſider well, *that it is by Jeſus Chriſt alone that you can be ſatisfied and*

ſupplied. The Law was given by Moſes, *but by him comes grace and truth*, 1 *John* 1. 17. He is the Mediatour, through whom, and for whoſe ſake we receive from God whatever our Souls ſtand in need of. He by his death hath purchas'd all things neceſſary for our ſalvation; he is aſcended on high, and hath received Gifts for his People. As King and Head of his Church, he communicates to his Members thoſe Graces, that by his death and interceſſion he hath obtained for them, and they are repleniſh'd with the *fulneſs of him who filleth all in all*. And then you are to take notice, that Chriſt hath appointed duties to be performed by us, and ſet up Ordinances, which we are diligently to attend upon, and by his Spirit accompanying them, he conveys Grace to the hearts of thoſe that are conſcionable in the uſe of theſe means. Such are hearkening to, and meditating upon the Word, *Joh.* 17. 17. *Sanctifie them by thy truth, thy word is truth.* 1 Pet. 2. 2. *As new born Babes deſire the ſincere Milk of the Word that you may grow thereby.* And Prayer to the Father in his name, *John* 14. 13. *Luke* 11. 13. —*How much more will your heavenly Father give the Spirit to thoſe that ask him*, Jam. 1. 5. *If any man lack wiſdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it ſhall be given him.* Such alſo is the Sacrament of Baptiſme, being duly improved, *Gal.* 3. 27. *For as many of you as have been baptized into Chriſt have put on Chriſt*, Rom. 6. 3, 4. 1 Pet. 3. 21. And laſtly, this receiving of the Lord's Supper, which is our feeding upon Chriſt who is the Paſchal Lamb ſacrificed for us, and herein to Believers, in a Spiritual ſenſe, is afforded a *Communion of the Body and Blood of Chriſt*, as we may find in the Apoſtle's words before mentioned. And when you have but arrived to a ſenſe of your own indigence, and Chriſt's fulneſs ſuitable thereto, there will neceſſarily ariſe in you, deſires after a

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participation of that fulneſs, which will bring you to, and prepare you for thoſe Ordinances, wherein theſe deſires may be gratified.

Laſtly, I would adviſe you to *beware, of ever entertaining a conceit, that you are become ſo full now, that you need nothing:* for that's a plain ſign you are poor and know it not; your Stomachs are filled with Wind inſtead of ſolid meat. And whilſt you are puft up with this ſelf-conceit, you will be hindred from ſeeking after what you really want. He that thinks his Barns full when they are empty, may through this miſtake firſt live in idleneſs, and after come to beggary. He that dreams of ſuch perfection, as makes all helps Chriſt hath appointed needleſs to him, neither knows himſelf, nor conſiders what a God he hath to ſerve, nor what a Law he hath given him to walk by. It's much to be feared, that he who thinks he hath Grace enough, hath yet got no ſaving Grace at all. He that knows enough is very ignorant, he that's humble enough is ſtill exceeding proud, and ſo of the reſt. For *he that hath taſted that the Lord is gracious*, longs after fuller communion with him. He that drinks of the Water Chriſt gives, though his ſickly thirſt after Creatures will be cured, yet will ſuch a thirſt after more of Chriſt ariſe in him, as will never be quench'd, 'till he be drench'd into the Ocean of grace and joy. Wherefore ſtudy thy ſelf, ſtudy the duty of this whole preſent ſtate, wherein we are enjoyn'd to *grow in grace*, and learn hence ſo much humility, ſo much wiſdom, as to own thy neceſſities, and not go about to cover them; for they will not always be hid; but rather uſe all means to ſupply them whilſt they are afforded.

And as there is required in all Receivers an earneſt longing after ſanctifying Grace, which is here vouchſafed; ſo the other qualification ſuitable hereto, I told

you is a *Reſolution to improve this grace*; that is to lay it out, and ſhew forth the fruit of it in an holy converſation. This is an effect of the former, and indeed neceſſarily flows from the nature of Grace, which is no way deſirable but for uſe and exerciſe: nor is it poſſible that it ſhould ordinarily lie ſtill in the heart, and not be brought forth into Act, and ſhewn in the life. He that deſires patience, humility, purity, temperance, to what purpoſe is it but to overcome the temptations, which he meets with in the World to the contrary vices, and to ſhew forth theſe fruits of the Spirit in all his converſe? Whence it appears, that no man is worthy to come to the Lord's Table, *who is not reſolved by the grace of God to live an holy life*, and to be led by the Spirit in all his ways. He that hath got any ſin which he is reſolv'd to keep, is not like to have any deſire after that Grace which ſhould mortifie and quell his ſin: nor any mind to remember that Death which was to *deliver us from this preſent evil world*. He's like to be far from a right remembrance of Chriſt, who will not be perſwaded to imitate him: for certainly that's one end of our remembring his Death, that we may thereby be drawn to follow his Example, which he gave us then as well as in his life, by his conſtancy, patience, charity to his Enemies, and ready reſignation of himſelf to his Fathers Will. *As he walked, ſo ought we to walk*, and from his very death may we fetch directions for our life. This reſolution for holineſs which I am ſpeaking of, is indeed one branch of our faith in Chriſt, being no other than our conſent to take him for our King, to guide and govern us in all our thoughts, words, and actions: and therefore having ſaid ſomething to it under that Head, as alſo the former of Repentance, I ſhall at preſent paſs it over.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

The third benefit is eternal happineſs with God.

3. THE laſt of thoſe benefits which I named, obtained for us by the death of Chriſt, and to be remembred at the Sacrament, *is eternal happineſs.* It is by his *reſurrection from the dead,* and conſequently by his death, that Believers have a *lively hope of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away, reſerved in heaven for them,* 1 Pet. 3. 4. It was his *Blood that redeemed them to be Kings and Prieſts to God,* Rev. 5. 9, 10. *He gave his Fleſh for the life of the world,* Joh. 6. 51. By Jeſus Chriſt God calls us to eternal Glory, 1 *Pet.* 5, 10. He opened the entrance into Paradiſe, which ſin had ſhut up. It was his will not onely that they who believe in him, ſhould be kept from the place where Satan was, but that they ſhould alſo *be with him where he is,* John 17. 24. This he pray'd for, this he died for; and is gone before to prepare a place for them, and keeps them here to prepare them for that place, and being ready they ſhall enter into the Kingdom. He receives their Spirits when they die, and will raiſe up their Bodies at the laſt day. *Now their life is hid with Chriſt in God, and when he appears, then ſhall they alſo appear with him in glory,* Coll. 3. 3, 4. Be we ſure then this Death of Chriſt cannot be remembred as it ought, if the Glory purchas'd thereby be forgotten. How can we remember a dying Chriſt, but withall we muſt call to mind, that he vanquiſh'd this death, is riſen again and aſcended into Glory, whether in due time he will exalt his People. Moreover that Covenant which is ſealed to by this Sacrament, promiſeth an everlaſting Kingdom to Believers: and can any man forget ſuch a benefit, even whilſt he is receiving a confirmation of his right

to it? Again here is that Grace given out which is the pledge, the ſeed, the beginning and foretaſt of Glory; here is the Meat that endures to everlaſting life: and who can forget his Journeys-end whilſt he is taking food to ſtrengthen him for his Travel? To conclude, here's a communion of Saints, which does in ſome meaſure ſhadow out and ſignifie that perfect communion which they ſhall have one with another, when all the Elect ſhall be gathered from the four corners of the Earth, and with *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob* ſhall ſit down, and for ever remain in the Kingdom of God: Now hence it appears, that the worthy Receiver muſt be one, *who hath taken the heavenly glory for his portion*; who hath got a treaſure above, and there placed his heart and his hopes: for none but ſuch a one can with any life and raiſedneſs remember this Glory, which is to be revealed. He that is wont to ſolace himſelf with the contemplation thereof, will rejoyce in every thing that hath a relation to it, much more in the remembrance of that price that was paid for it. But how can the Earthworm, whoſe Soul lies groveling upon the duſt, bring himſelf to any affectionate thoughts of hidden treaſures, which cannot be got into his Bags nor Coffers, which he cannot ſo much as get a ſight of. Nor can the ſwiniſh voluptuous ſinners, that feed upon none but the muddy delights of ſenſe, take any comfort in the forethoughts of pure and ſpiritual pleaſures, ſuch as are prepared for exalted purified Souls. Any, whoever they be, that place their chief contentment on Earth, are not like, with any pleaſure, to think of that time, when they muſt leave this Earth, and enter upon another ſtate, where are no ſuch ſenſual Enjoyments as here they bleſt themſelves in. Ignorant, narrow Souls have no heart to think of what ſhall be thouſands and millions of years to come. Theſe poor ſordid Spirits are ſo glewed to the

little trifles of the world, that they look not ſo high as after Crowns and Scepters which Chriſt hath in ſtore for his faithful followers. And they who never took much pains to ſecure and clear up their evidence for Heaven, but have taken it for granted, that they muſt needs go thither at laſt, or counted it an indifferent thing whether they do or not, will be far from thoſe lively apprehenſions of the greatneſs of that love which purchas'd it, and of the excellency of the bliſs it ſelf, which are neceſſary for him who can rightly remember either.

Now to bring thoſe who are yet ſtrangers hereto, to ſuch an apprehenſion of the Glory to come by Chriſt, that they may chuſe it as their portion, and ſo be joyfully taken up in the expectations thereof: in one word I would deſire thee, whoever thou art, that haſt but ſo much common reaſon as to diſtinguiſh between good and evil, to conſider well whether thou haſt not a Soul as well as a Body, and whether this Soul muſt not remain in being and alive, when thy Body is rotting in the Earth, and whether then it doth not as much, yea infinitely much more, concern thee to ſeek out for ſomewhat, that may at that time make thy Soul happy, than for what may now pleaſe thy Senſes. Yea, ſince thou muſt live ſomewhere for ever, think whether it is not more worthy thy care, to provide for an everlaſting well-being, than for the conforts of a frail ſhort life. If thou art thus far convinced, then make an impartial ſearch, whether there be any thing here below that's able to make thee perfectly happy. Thy Houſes and Lands, thy Pleaſures and Honours, will any, or all of theſe give in all that felicity which thou deſireſt or needeſt? Are they of the ſame nature with thy Soul? or will they laſt as long as it will laſt? muſt not all thy merry days at length come to an end? And wilt thou be ever the better for all thou haſt enjoy'd when once

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it's over? will the remembrance give thee any satisfaction? In that night wherein thy Soul will be required of thee, what advantage wilt thou have from the goods thou had'st laid up for many years? yea, or from those goods thou had'st liv'd upon the years before? When the Earth and all its works shall be burnt up, where will all thy possessions and treasures be? If thou hast nothing to live on, but what will be turned into flames, what wilt thou then fix upon? At that day when there shall be no marrying or giving in marriage, no Wives or Children, no Relation or Friends, whose Society will afford any such comfort as here it did; when the interest of Princes and great ones, whose favour was here thy shelter, and thy Pride shall all be vanish'd, what will thy confidence in men avail thee? Examine these or any other outward prop whereon thou leanest, and see whether it be not a broken Reed: And if so, except thou art resolv'd against thy own happiness, methinks thou should'st now onely make choice of that which will never give thee cause to repent what thou did'st, as all things will, but the eternal Glory which God hath promised to those that love him. But he that can once upon good grounds say, *This Heaven is mine, I shall see the face of God with joy, and live in his love for ever*, may now lead a serene and cheerful life in the midst of all occurrences; and need not be daunted at Death it self, but rather rejoyced, as it takes him to the possession of his treasure, wafts him to his own home. Wherefore, if thou love thy life, be perswaded to aim at this highest glory; let nothing short of it content thee, think no condition hard to get it; rest not 'till thou hast made it as sure as thou canst that it's thine; and then having thus fixt thy end, thou mayst travel on with alacrity and speed, and take abundance of comfort in the forethoughts of thy future bliss, in using all helps afforded

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in thy journey to it, and in the remembrance of that precious Blood which was ſhed to purchaſe it, and by conſequence wilt be fitted to celebrate the Sacrament.

CHAP. IX.

V. *It muſt be a thankful Remembrance.*

IT is not poſſible that the death of Chriſt can be remembred as it ought, without the *moſt hearty and unfeigned thankfulneſs to God, for ſo great and glorious a mercy.* Hath he the heart of a man that can contemplate the ſufferings of Chriſt, and the infinite unſpeakable benefits thereby procured for poor ſinners, and not find himſelf raiſed to return thanks and praiſe to God, for his gracious dealings with mankind? This duty is ſo proper to the Lord's Supper, that hence it anciently obtained the name of *Euchariſt*, a return of thanks. Since then, every man who partakes thereof, ought to be thus truly thankful to God for his love revealed in Chriſt, this again acquaints us what kind of perſons Communicants muſt be, namely, *ſuch who are capable of rendring acceptable praiſe to God*, which doth but give farther evidence of the neceſſity of thoſe qualifications before laid down. None but ſuch as have been made ſenſible of the evil of ſin, and of the danger they were thereby liable to, will be heartily thankful for that mercy which prevented this miſery, by purchaſing and vouchſafing the forgiveneſs of their ſins. How formal and hypocritical are his thanks like to be for Chriſt, who never yet ſaw, what need he ſtood in of him? Will he thank you for a Plaiſter that never felt himſelf wounded? Can he have any grateful ſenſe of the love that pluck'd poor ſinners as Brands out of the fire, who never perceived

perceived himself in any such danger? Can he be thankful for ease and rest, who never felt his strong lusts, nor the curse of the Law and wrath of God, as any load or burden upon him? Nor can he be thankful for the Grace that is given by Christ, who had far rather keep his sins, than be renewed and sanctified. Little thanks will he return for the light who is but disturbed and troubled with it, and so far ashamed by it, that he cannot pursue his wicked designs with that freedome and eagerness as he could before whilst he was more in the dark, where he had still rather remain. How can he thank God for Grace, who rejects and despiseth it? For being taken out of the snares of the Devil, who wilfully fastens himself into them? Will he praise God for liberty and ability to serve him, who saith of his service, *what a wearineſs is it?* and thinks it would be better for him if he might live as he list, and never be put upon so much trouble as Godliness brings along with it? Nor can he be thankful for the Glory to be had by Christ, who hath not a sound perswasion of the certainty and excellency of it, and who hath not firmly resolved to take it for his portion. He that knows nothing better than bodily enjoyments, and would think himself undone was he stript of these, is like to be very cold in giving thanks for spiritual blessings. In a word, he that is sensible of no great benefit he shall have by Christ either here or hereafter, cannot be expected to have any great measure of thankfulness for this mercy which he so little understands. And this is the case of all unhumbled, unsanctified ones, to whom the Gospel is hid, their minds being darkened by the God of this World. And if these poor senseless Creatures should with a few feigned words pretend to give God thanks for Jesus Christ, yet would it be but the Sacrifice of Fools, a meer lip-service, and therefore no way accepta-

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ble to the moſt holy God. Yea indeed they would hereby but very ſolemnly mock the Divine Majeſty, whilſt they thank him for thoſe mercies which they will not accept at his hands; praiſing him for Jeſus Chriſt and the benefits he brings, whilſt they will have none of him or them, on the terms that God propoundeth. No, no, it is onely the broken-healed heart, the humble raiſed Soul, that can be feelingly and affectionately thankful to God for a Saviour, who hath wrought ſo great works for them, and in them, and laid up ſuch great proviſions for the time to come. They that were loſt but are found, they that were dead but are alive, in theſe will their heavenly Father take pleaſure, and theſe will rejoyce in his love, and return praiſe to him, who ſent his Son, to ſeek and ſave that which was loſt.

To bring men into ſuch a ſtate and frame, that they may be diſpoſed and enabled, from an inward ſenſe of his Goodneſs, to render ſuch thanks to the Father of Mercies, as may be well-pleaſing to him; I ſhould onely need to repeat what was before laid down to bring them to accept of Chriſt, which when once they are brought to, and arrived to any hopes of their acceptance with God through him, then both in heart and voice, with their lips and lives will they adore and praiſe him, who *called them out of darkneſs into his marvellous light*. Wherefore ſtudy well your many and great neceſſities which Chriſt alone can ſupply. Conſider to what miſeries by ſin you ſtand expoſed, from which he alone can keep you. Remember what he did and ſuffered, how low he condeſcended for the ſake of man, and remember your own utter unworthineſs, that ever the leaſt love or regard ſhould have been manifeſted to you; and yet conſider what great things are done for you, into how good a ſtate matters are brought, what abundant bleſſings are freely beſtowed on the humble

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and believing, what rich and precious promiſes are made them, what mercies are given for this life, and that to come, Grace and Glory, and whatever is good for men, nothing is withheld from them. Let but the conſideration of all the rich and precious priviledges which Chriſt gives to his Servants, ſink into thy Soul, and then thou wilt find it even impoſſible, not to magnifie the Author and Purchaſer of ſuch Gifts; nor wilt thou be able to refrain from expreſſions of thy Gratitude and Love; and therefore mayſt worthily come to the Sacrament, there to exerciſe and expreſs thoſe holy affections.

CHAP. X.

VI. *It muſt produce a holy love to Saints.*

HE that rightly remembers the Death of Chriſt, and well conſiders the infinite love herein ſhewn to mankind, cannot but be thereby wrought to an *hearty love to all his fellow Chriſtians.* And that's the laſt qualification I ſhall mention, neceſſary for all Communicants, and which flows from their remembrance of Chriſt, to wit, *that they be in charity with all men, and have an eſpecial endeared love to all true Chriſtians*, both thoſe that communicate with them and others. To this great duty of brotherly love we have the moſt forcible engagement that ever could be imagined, by the example of our bleſſed Lord laying down his life for us; and his behaviour at death, even praying for his perſecutors, doth ſufficiently tell us how we ought to behave our ſelves towards our bittereſt adverſaries. We ſee then what a ſpirit we ſhall have wrought in us by a right remembrance of our dying Saviour, not onely toward our

our friends but our Enemies themſelves. As for that love that ought to be amongſt all true Chriſtians, we find this is the new Command, that he hath inculcated upon us, and obliged us to by the great example of his unparallell'd love, that we alſo ſhould love one another, *Joh.* 15, 12, 13. 1 *Joh.* 3. 16. And this he hath made the very Badge of his true Diſciples, whereby they ſhould be known from the reſt of the world, *Joh.* 13. 34, 35. And one particular end of our meeting together at the Lord's Table, is to teſtifie and ſtrengthen our mutual love. This we ſhew by our eating and drinking together, which is the cuſtome of Friends: and this is one reaſon why this Sacrament is called the *Communion*, in that Chriſtians have here the moſt endearing fellowſhip with each other. For hereby is not onely repreſented their union with Chriſt their Head, and their ſpiritual communion with him, but that neerneſs of relation they have amongſt themſelves, being myſtically united into one Body, whereof Chriſt is the Head, 1 *Cor.* 10. 17. *For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.* Each Chriſtian is ſo related to and joyned with the other, that they go to the making up of one Body, as the ſeveral Grains compacted together make one Bread; and by their joynt participation of this one Bread, they declare themſelves to be but one Body, the Children of one Father, living in one Family, and feeding at the ſame Table, upon the very ſame food, even upon Chriſt himſelf, who is the *true bread that came down from Heaven*, and upon their being united to Chriſt as Head, is founded this their ſo near and intimate relation to each other, to be Fellow-Members of the ſame Body; as they that have the ſame Soveraign are Fellow-ſubjects, they that have the ſame Parents are Brethren: and by their feeding on this Sacramental food, and Chriſt himſelf therein, *from whom*

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the whole body being fitly joyned together makes increaſe, unto the edifying of it ſelf in love, Eph. 4. 15, 16. having here a communion with him, which fills and acts them with the ſame Spirit; hereby, I ſay, they receive a farther bond and diſpoſition to the greateſt unity of hearts and affections. So that we are eſpecially engaged before our attendance upon this Ordinance, *to go our way, and be reconciled to our Brother. The leven of malice*, amongſt all other wickedneſs, is to be *purged out, when we keep this Feaſt*, 1 *Cor.* 5. 7, 8. And indeed we ſhall find this the general ſenſe of People, that they ought to be in charity with their Neighbours before they come to the Sacrament, whilſt they diſcover too little ſenſe of the neceſſity of other Graces that are equally needful; yea, whilſt they remain deſtitute of this very charity it ſelf, which they acknowledge to be ſo neceſſary: for, alas! they are not ſo eaſily brought to the practice of their duty as to acknowledge and commend it. For the plain truth is, none can riſe up to this excellent temper of Spirit, wherein one half of our Religion conſiſts, but he who is ingrafted into Chriſt, and transformed into his likeneſs by the Spirit of love; which may direct thoſe who are yet void hereof what courſe to take for the attainment of the ſame, namely, to get united to Chriſt by a living faith and fervent love, whereby they ſhall find kindled in their breaſts a new affection to all that do with them love the Lord Jeſus. For certainly it is not enough for us, that we have no malice in our hearts againſt any, nor wiſh them any hurt; this is a poor deſcription of Chriſtian charity, and may be found in a *Turk* or *Jew*, but there ought to be in us, beſides a general love to all mankind, which makes us deſirous of their good, a peculiar tender love to all Chriſt's faithful ſervants, which cauſeth us to take delight in them, as ſuch in whom we behold the image of God ſhining forth in

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their holy converſations, and begets in us unfeigned deſires for their good both of Soul and Body, and makes us willing to contribute our aſſiſtance thereto, according to our ability and their neceſſities, inward or outward, and inclines us to rejoyce in their good in ſome meaſure as if it was our own; and hereby our hearts are ſo knit to them, that we hold greateſt familiarity with them, and take pleaſure in their ſociety and conference, and more eſpecially in joyning with them in the worſhip and ſervice of God. This is a moſt ſweet affection, and the exerciſe of it is exceeding pleaſant to a gracious Soul: which, was it more common in the world, would reform it from a wilderneſs into a kind of Paradice; and the perfection of it, will be one great part of our future happineſs. But this true Chriſtian love can dwell in none but ſuch in whom God dwells, who is love. Onely they who are recovered out of the ſelfiſh carnal ſtate, and are brought home to God by Jeſus Chriſt, are the men that are capable of this ſincere love to their brethren, for which many clear reaſons might be given, was it needful and pertinent. But this may ſuffice for all, that this affection is grounded upon, and follows our ſpiritual relation, and therefore a man muſt firſt be in Chriſt himſelf, before he can love another purely as his brother in Chriſt, as a fellow-member of the ſame body. He that hath not ſubmitted himſelf to his Prince, cannot love another upon account of his being a fellow ſubject with him to the ſame Soveraign: And hence it is we find this given in as a character of our Regeneration, 1 *Joh.* 3. 14. *Hereby we know we are paſt from death to life, becauſe we love the brethren.* Moſt certain it is, that they who find not in themſelves a love to any people in the world upon account of their being made like to God in holineſs, are deſtitute of true love to God himſelf. Wherefore I would adviſe you to try

your ſelves by this note, look into your own hearts, and look abroad amongſt thoſe you hold your deareſt friends, and examine what it is that draws out your love towards them. Are they therefore dear to you, becauſe they appear to you to be lovers of God, and ſuch as have a great zeal for his Glory, becauſe they are of pious exemplary lives, and therefore (ſo far as you can diſcern) of gracious ſpirits? Do you love them as thoſe that are bought with the ſame blood, and ſanctified by the ſame Spirit with your ſelves? As ſuch who are helpful to your Souls, or receive help from you, and walk in the ſame holy way, and with whom you hope to live for ever in the ſame Glory? Or is not all your affection founded upon carnal reaſons, and beſtowed onely upon your kindred, or ſuch that have done you courteſies in worldly matters; but as for the reſt, you ſee no reaſon, why you ſhould love one more than another. Nay farther, do you not find your hearts ſecretly riſe againſt ſuch holy perſons, as I before mentioned, ſo that you had rather be in any company than theirs, and could even wiſh the world rid of them, becauſe their blameleſs lives do condemn and ſhame yours; and ſometimes their loving admonitions check and diſturb you, as *Lot* was a trouble to the *Sodomites*? Are you not ſo far from a reverend eſteem of Godlineſs, that you can rather ſcoff at it, though perhaps under other names, and are prone to think it nothing elſe but fancy and folly to be ſo ſhy of ſin, and ſo extream careful to pleaſe God? If it be thus, for certain you are no better than haters of God himſelf, as he is holy and juſt, though it may be you think not ſo much by your ſelves. He that loves the Father will love the Child alſo, ſo far as he's like him; he that loves the perſon will love his picture. *He that loveth not his brother whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God whom he hath not ſeen?* 1 Joh. 4.20.

4. 20. Wherefore ſee to get your hearts deeply affected with the Glories and Excellencies of the bleſſed God, and you will find your ſelves carried out to a great eſteem of any ſhadows and reſemblances of theſe in his people. Let Chriſt be once the chiefeſt of ten thouſand to your Souls, altogether lovely and deſireable, and then you will count thoſe in whom he hath copied out himſelf, and ſhed abroad his own Spirit, to be the only excellent ones upon earth, in whom you will take great delight. You will then ſo fall in love with his Image wherever you diſcern it, that in compariſon thereof you will even diſdain all thoſe worldly excellencies, which do ſo dazle the eyes of ſhort-ſighted, mean-ſpirited ones. That humility, purity, reverence of the divine Majeſty, gentleneſs, goodneſs, and all other fruits of the Spirit, which diſplay themſelves in the behaviour of the truly ſanctified, will make them appear more honourable in your eyes, and render them far more dear to you than thoſe, who have nothing to commend them to your eſteem, but that they have great Eſtates, wear brave cloathes, and have high titles conferred upon them: though you muſt not be wanting in thoſe reſpects that are due to outward greatneſs, yet if you be Chriſtians of a right ſtamp, you will be ſuch as *David* mentions, when he deſcribes a Citizen of *Zion*, Pſal. 15. 4. *One in whoſe eyes a vile perſon is contemned, but he honoureth them that fear the Lord.* Yea farther, you will ſee more reaſon for your love to thoſe that are holy, than to your brethren or neareſt kindred in the fleſh, or than to thoſe that are onely of the ſame opinions and principles that you your ſelves are of, which do lamentably confine and regulate the affections of the moſt. But the right Chriſtian temper is far more generous and large; for being derived from the bowels of Chriſt, it begets the ſame diſpoſition in the Souls wherein it

dwells, according to their capacity, that is in Christ himself. And therefore they hate none, they envy none: as for the wicked miserable ones, they pity, and even mourn over them, as we find Christ did, and with patience and meekness are ready to give them all the help they can, to bring them out of their uncomfortable dangerous estates; but all whom they have reason to believe Christ loves, that walk as he hath enjoyned all his friends to do, these they dearly love: And such errours or infirmities, which will not cause Christ to withdraw his favour from them, will not take off their affections: for they dare not pretend to a greater strictness than their Lord, lest what they might call *pure zeal* for him, should be found *pure selfishness*. And therefore they dare not make their own private apprehensions, which they find not in the Creed, nor in the Gospel, the standard and measure of such as must pass for godly, and be thought worthy their regard and esteem, which is the constant note of one addicted to a party: but, I say, they would have their friendship as large as their Lord and Masters, since 'tis for his sake that they have any friends at all. Such is the affection which God's Spirit works in his people, and with which they are possess'd so far as they are fram'd and moulded by his Spirit.

But moreover, the charity requisite in Communicants, consists not onely in a cordial love to the Godly, whom they are to reckon upon as dearest friends, but also in forgiveness of injuries to all that are their enemies, and have done or endeavoured to do them wrong: which temper is of flat necessity to all that would come worthily to this Ordinance. Hither men come expecting a pardon; and can he look for a pardon of his many and hainous sins from the great God of heaven and earth, who will not forgive some small offence that he may

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have received from his fellow-creature? Small, I ſay, for the greateſt injury that can be done us by another is exceeding ſmall, and not worthy our notice ſo far as we our ſelves onely are concerned therein. Selfiſh men will never believe this, but it's a certain truth, and ſo plain, that many ſober heathens do with great earneſtneſs inculcate it. Alas, what can they do but a little hinder our thriving in the world, or deny us that reſpect we would have by their careleſs carriage, or ſpeak meanly or falſly of us to leſſen our credit? Such like trifles as theſe are the worſt that we ſhall ordinarily meet with from our bittereſt enemies. And are theſe ſuch inſufferable injuries, that by all means we muſt ſeek to be revenged? Surely, ſuch a wicked ſpirit cannot enter into the breaſt of a Chriſtian, that remembers what he hath done againſt God, and yet what he expects from him, and what he hath alredy received.

And indeed there is nothing more likely to bring us to the performance of this duty to our brother, than the ſerious conſideration of the infinite mercy God hath ſhewn to us in ſending his Son, and freely tendering forgiveneſs through him. This we find preſs'd upon us *Eph.* 4. 32. *And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Chriſt's ſake hath forgiven you.* Col. 3. 13. *Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another: if any man have a quarrel againſt any, even as Chriſt forgave you, ſo alſo do ye.* And to engage us the more, our forgiving of others is made a condition of being forgiven our ſelves, *Matth.* 6. 14, 15. *For if ye forgive men their treſpaſſes, your heavenly father will alſo forgive you; but if you forgive men not their treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive your treſpaſſes.* How hard-hearted muſt that ſervant be, who, when his Lord hath forgiven him ten thouſand talents, takes his brother by the

throat, and casts him into prison for an hundred pence? How just is it that all the former debt should be charged by his Lord upon such a Servant? as you may find in the Parable at large, *Matth.* 18. from 23 to the end, where, after Christ had told, how terribly that unthankful cruel Servant was dealt with, he addes ver. last, *So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses* To love God above all, and our neighbour as our selves, are the two great commandments, whereon depend the Law and the Prophets, and which comprehend all our duty: and to both of these we have the greatest help, and strongest obligation by the Death of Christ that ever could be thought on. Shall we not love him that hath thus loved us? And shall we not shew pity and compassion to others who have received so much our selves? Yea, who shall be shut out from mercy if we be unmerciful? No spirit in the world is so contrary to the Gospel as that of malice and revenge, and retaining a secret enmity and spight against any person whatever. As thou would'st escape the society and portion of Devils hereafter, beware how thou now entertainest this Devilish nature, than which nothing is more frequently forbidden in the Gospel, and nothing more flatly enjoyned than the contrary temper, *Gal.* 5. 20. *Now the fruits of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication,* &c. *hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies envyings, murders:* ver. 22. *But the fruit of the Spirit is love joy, peace, long-suffering gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness,* &c. *Col.* 3. 8. *But now ye also put off all these, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy,* &c. *v.* 12, 12. *Put on therefore (as the elect of God, holy and beloved) bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering.* When the Apostle *Paul* wrote to the *Corinthians* to rectifie the disorders they

they were guilty of, in reference to the Lord's Supper, the first thing he falls upon, is the Divisions that were amongst them, 1 *Cor.* 11. 18. That composedness of Soul, that humility, self-abasement, and humble dependance upon free mercy, which are so absolutely necessary for him that would profit by this Ordinance, do all call for a quiet, charitable frame of Spirit toward our brethren, when we betake our selves thereto.

And thus by (God's assistance) have I in some measure shown, from the nature and design of this Ordinance (which is to keep up the remembrance of Christ) how those persons must be qualified who can duly attend thereupon. To repeat their description once again: They who are furnish'd with the knowledge of the necessary fundamental truths of Christian Religion, and do believe them to be indeed truths, being so verily perswaded that Christ is the Saviour of the world, that they heartily consent to take him for their Saviour, and therefore being humbled for, and resolved presently to turn from all their evil ways, do humbly expect (or at least earnestly desire) the pardon of their sins from the mercy of God for his sake; and are truly willing to have their hearts sanctified by the Spirit of God given out through him, that they may lead an holy life; and do depend upon him to bring them to everlasting Glory in the enjoyment of God, upon whom they have set their dearest love, and chose him as their onely portion; being sincerely thankful for the manifestations of his wonderful love in Christ, and by the power of this love are in charity with all men, forgiving their enemies, and having a peculiar affection to the members of Christ: These, and onely these are fit to partake of the Lord's Supper. Wherefore I intreat thee, whoever thou art, that would'st not wilfully delude thy own Soul, and rush upon this duty to thy hurt, take thy self to task,

and examine well whether thou art such a one as I have here described: yea, if thou hast any desire to escape everlasting misery, and be received into Heaven when thou diest, examine thy self; for except thou beest or becomest such a one, as sure as God is true, thou art never like to be saved.

CHAP. XI.

An invitation to come to Christ and his Sacrament, with Motives thereto.

Use. MY next work is now to call upon and exhort all, thus to examine and prepare themselves, and so to come and eat of this Bread, and drink of this Cup. Ho! all you that have any love to the blessed Jesus, who loved you to the shedding of his warmest hearts-blood for your sakes, come hither and *shew forth his death 'till he come*. If Christ be precious to you, let his memory be precious, and be you careful to preserve it by your due and frequent attendance upon this Ordinance, set up on purpose for the Remembrance of him. All you whose eyes have been opened to discern the vileness of your natures and conversations, come hither, and give a kindly vent to your Sorrow, beholding sin at the worst, in those wounds that it gave to your dearest Saviour. All you that are indeed convinced that Christ is the true Messiah, come forth from God to give life to the world, and are resolved to hearken to him that your Souls may live, come hither, and before God, Angels, and Men, profess these Resolutions, and bind your selves over to him, to be his Disciples and most obedient Servants. Be not asham'd of the Cross of Christ, but avow it before all the world, that

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your hope of happineſs is placed onely in that *Jeſus, who was ſlain, and hanged on a Tree*, but is riſen again and aſcended into the Heavens; hereby own that you are Chriſtians, let others be what they will. Come hither all you that hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs, and feed upon him, who here conveys of himſelf to the empty longing Soul, and ſatisfies his people with good things ſuitable to their wants. Come hither poor dejected drooping Soul, that doſt unfeignedly love thy Lord, but art afraid thou ſhalt never obtain his favour; come and ſee what he hath done to aſſure thee of the reality, the freeneſs and fulneſs of his love; Come and taſt the proviſions he hath made for thy comfort, and rejoyce in the ſenſe of his bounty. All you that expect ſhortly to look your Redeemer in the face, come hither and behold him, where 'till then, you may moſt clearly diſcern him. Here ſtamp his image firmly upon your minds, that he may live in your breaſts, though for a while he is out of your ſight, that 'till you ſhall ſee him, you may never be forgetful of him. Come hither young ones, and betimes liſt your ſelves under Chriſt your Leader, here *Remember your Creatour* and Redeemer *in the days of your youth!* Come hither ye aged that have ſtood idle in the Market-place, 'till the eleventh hour of the day, now at length hire your ſelves under the Lord of the Vineyard, to be more induſtrious in his ſervice for the hour that is behind. Come hither ye Poor, and partake of a Feaſt that ſhall coſt you nothing. Come hither ye Rich, to a Feaſt more precious and coſtly than ever you were at, which coſt the Maſter thereof his own life to provide it. Come hither, ye Maſters, and promiſe to become the Servants of Chriſt. Come hither ye Servants, and by taking Chriſt for your Lord become his Freemen. Yea, all you that have been the moſt eſtranged from God, and greateſt deſpiſers of Chriſt,

Christ, yet now at length if you will come in, acknowledging the folly of your former ways, protesting against any longer continuance therein, humbly imploring mercy and acceptance from God through his Son, even you are invited hither, to testifie the truth of your return to him, and to receive the pardon that is ready for you. Behold, *Wisdom hath builded her house, and furnish'd her table*, and calls to all *to eat of her bread, and drink of the wine that she hath mingled*; to all that are fully determined to *forsake the foolish, and go in the way of understanding*. Hearken you foolish prodigals, whose Souls are out of tast with all solid food, through your feeding upon the luscious delights of sin and the creature, which yet have only deluded, never satisfied you: Cast away these empty husks, and come to a plenteous Feast here made ready, wherein you will acknowledge there is sweetness and fulness, if your distempers be cured, and your appetite and relish changed. So large is the commission which Christ hath granted, that in his name I dare confidently invite all, whoever they are, or whatever they have been, even the most profane and sensual, drunkards and whoremongers, the proud and covetous, if now at last you will be perswaded to bid an everlasting farewel to all your ways of wickedness, and for the time to come to walk in the holy path, see that you are sincere, and you may come boldly to the Sacrament, there to manifest and confirm these purposes. If at length you are weary of that miserable drudgery, wherein the enemy and tormentour of mankind, the Devil, hath imployed you, labouring to keep you in bondage to sin, than which there is not a more loathsome stinking Dungeon, more intolerable chains in all the world; if, I say, you would fain be delivered from this slavery, and will *take on you Christ's easie yoke, that you may find rest for your souls*, come hither and enter

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your ſelves into his Service, engaging to be ſubject to him all the days of your life. In a word, all you that have been baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and holy Ghoſt, and underſtanding what that ſignifies, do conſent to the obligations thereby laid upon you, come to the Lord's Supper, and manifeſt this conſent, and renew this Covenant to be the Lords.

Some conſiderations I ſhall lay before you, to quicken you to the performance of this weighty duty, which I propoſe not ſo much to thoſe who are already prepared, that they would come to this Feaſt; but rather to all indifferently, that they would prepare themſelves, and come away without any longer delay.

1. To that end, firſt conſider, *this is the expreſs command of Chriſt*, as you may find at his firſt inſtitution of this Sacrament before mentioned, *Luk.* 22. 19. *This do in remembrance of me.* And to whom was this command given do you think? only to the Apoſtles, or in them to all Chriſtians? What reaſon can be given why it ſhould be peculiar to them, and not common to others? They were look'd upon, and ſpoke to here, as Diſciples, and therefore all Chriſt's Diſciples are concerned therein. And you cannot think this was an injunction that had reference to that time onely; the very phraſe, *Remembrance*, ſpeaks the contrary: for this implies ſomething that's paſt, or abſent; which ſhews they were to do this after the Death of Chriſt ſhould be paſt, and he aſcended from them into heaven, in remembrance of him and his Death. But to put the matter paſt doubt, we have the practice of the Apoſtles after Chriſt's Death and Aſcenſion, telling us how they underſtood this command: and I hope we ſhall find none ſo impudent, as to ſay they miſunderſtood it. Now though it was always wont to be accounted profaneneſs, to violate the commands of Chriſt, yet there are a ſort of men in the world,

world, that would make it a piece of religion forsooth, to contemn this his injunction, and their disobedience to his Law must pass for a sign of their perfection. But if they stand condemned by all impartial men, who, not onely in name, but in deed, would bring more Sacraments into the Church than Christ hath done, giving the same honour to, and pleading for the same efficacy and necessity of their inventions as of Christ's own institutions, wherein the *Papists* are grosly guilty: what do they better, who would cast forth of the Church those Sacraments, which our Lord hath ordained, as if they were useless unnecessary things, which is the doctrine of our *Quakers*. If there was nothing else to be said in answer to the unreasonable pretences of these men, is it not enough that we have a plain command of Christs to oppose to their Fancy? He saith to all his followers, *Do this*, and they say, *Do it not:* which should we rather hearken to? And hereby judge what spirit that is, which riseth up in such flat contradiction to the voice of Christ? But farther, can they or any man else shew, that this command is founded upon such reasons, as makes it of less force and obligation to us, than to those whom it was first given to? Do not all the grounds of this duty which were then, still remain the same? as I shall shew more afterward. Wherefore let them either shew where Christ hath repealed the precept which he once gave, or let them beware of falling under the woe denounced against such, as not onely break his commands, but teach others so to do.

And little less guilty than these are they, who, though they will grant Christ's command in force, yet give not obedience to it; and though they will not say this Sacrament is unprofitable, yet by their neglect receive no profit from it. All you that have been long since at years of discretion, and have had frequent

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opportunities to come to the Lord's Table, and yet have not cared to inform your ſelves, what it is you ſhould do there, what good you ſhould get by it, and ſo have taken no care to make preparations for this duty, but from year to year have neglected it; what think you of this courſe, I beſeech you? Stay a while and reflect upon it. Did you never hear of a command given by the Lord Jeſus, that all true Chriſtians ſhould meet together at this Supper, and there in remembrance that his body was broken, and his blood ſhed for them, eat Bread, and drink Wine, ſet apart for that purpoſe? Hath he given a command to this purpoſe, or hath he not? That it was ſpoken to the Apoſtles, I have told you, hinders not, but that it belongs as well to you, ſince if you be ſincere Chriſtians as they were, you have the ſame cauſe to do this that they had. When Chriſt bids them deny themſelves, love one another, and pray to the Father in his name; do not theſe precepts reach you and I, as well as thoſe particular perſons to whom he ſpake them? And tell me if you can, why the caſe is not the ſame, as to that command of his, which I have even now mentioned, that we ſhould *Do this*, receive this Sacrament of his Supper, *in remembrance of him*. He that hath commanded you to mortifie your luſts, to love God above all, he it is hath enjoyned you to do this; and if you think he ought to be obeyed in one thing, why not in all? So then ſince you cannot but grant, that ſuch a command there is, what can you ſay for your ſelves who have diſobeyed it? Are you not hereby guilty of contemning the Authority of the Law-giver? what ſay you? Do you think you have herein behaved your ſelves as yo ought? Can you imagine, that this your negligence and diſobedience is acceptable to the Lord Jeſus? Or do you not care whether it is or not? I hope it is not all one with you to pleaſe or to provoke him. Does not then your

your Conſcience by this time ſmite you for your careleſneſs? If not, I doubt it is ſeared, and ſenſeleſs; if it does, then let me ask you what you intend for the time to come? Will you hold on that courſe which you dare not juſtifie, which your own Conſcience condemns you for? Dare you ſtill perſiſt in the breach of a known law? Have you any thing to ſay againſt the law it ſelf, or againſt him that made it? Is it not the Law of Chriſt the Son of God, your Redeemer? And hath not he power to enjoyn you what he pleaſeth? Hath not he right to govern you upon account of his Redeeming you? And are not all things delivered into his hands by the Father? Yea, does not the Father himſelf ſpeak to you, in and by him? does not he himſelf tell us, that the words which he ſpoke were the Fathers that ſent him? *John* 14. 10. and 24. Can you then gainſay Chriſt's Authority? If not, how dare you reſiſt it? Do you indeed take him for your Lord, or not? Anſwer me one way or other. If you do not, then call your ſelves no longer Chriſtians: for this your ſubjection is eſſential to your Chriſtianity, as I have before ſhewed. If you do, then pray tell me, how can this conſiſt with wilful violation of plain precepts? Do you take him for your Maſter, if you will yeild him no reverence nor fear? Will you not be as ſubject to your Lord as the *Centurion*'s ſervants were to him? to whom if he ſaid but, *do this*, they did it. Let this be the tryal whether you will or not: Behold Chriſt ſaith to thee in the Goſpel, and now in his name, and with power from him, I charge thee, *Do this*, come and partake of his Supper which he hath prepared for his friends and followers. Here now is a *Do this:* wilt thou obey it or not? If thou wilt not, conſider well, whether Chriſt be like to reckon thee among his faithful Servants at laſt; and what thou would'ſt think of a Servant of thy own

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that ſhould carry himſelf thus towards thee. What thy uſual ſhifts and evaſions are, I ſhall take notice anon and give thee an anſwer. Onely at preſent let me make haſt to intreat thee not to miſtake me, and deceive thy ſelf, as if I was thus earneſt and importunate with thee for nothing elſe, but to go with thy neighbours ſometimes when a Sacrament is adminiſtred, and there take a bit of Bread, and a ſup of Wine, with a little ſeeming reverence, without any due conſideration before or after to what purpoſe it is. Canſt thou be ſo ſilly as to imagine, thou haſt ſatisfied the will of Chriſt when thou haſt done this? Or canſt thou think thy Soul ever the better for it? Wherefore remember what it was I firſt exhorted thee to, namely to examine and prepare thy ſelf, and ſo to eat of this bread, and drink of this Cup; to repent of, and ſet thy ſelf againſt all ſin, and to devote thy ſelf to Chriſt, and then to take the Sacrament as a teſtimony that thou doſt ſo, and as a bond to oblige thee firmer to him. This I have frequently told thee; and that thou mayſt be ſure to underſtand my meaning, and remember it, take it once again in this plain compariſon; If a Maſter was about to bargain with one to be his Servant, offering ſo much wages, and a Shilling in earneſt; and another that ſtands by, having a mind to drive on the bargain, ſhould perſwade the Servant not to ſtand off, but to take his earneſt; do you not know what he meant by this? Do you think he wiſht the man onely to take the Shilling, and go his way without any more ado? ſurely no, but to agree with him to become his Servant, to do the work he ſhould appoint him, and to ſhew his conſent to this, ſhould take the Shilling that was to be given in earneſt. Thus, Reader, being earneſtly deſirous to drive on a match betwixt Chriſt and thy Soul, I would fain beg thee to take the Sacrament, as an evidence of

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thy conſent to become his faithful ſervant; but upon no other terms I'le aſſure thee. Wherefore if thou be reſolved againſt the diligent ſervice of God, and yet ventureſt upon this Ordinance, let the blame be upon thy own head. Do not think to excuſe thy ſelf by ſaying, thou read'ſt a Book that told thee it was Chriſt's command to all, that they ſhould receive the Sacrament, and that therefore thou didſt as thou waſt inſtructed: for again and again have I made known to thee, that none ought to do thus but true Chriſtians, ſuch as believe in, love and obey the Lord Jeſus; and this is that to which thou art implicitly urged by that very command which he hath given for the frequenting his Supper.

And this I would preſs upon all that perform this duty rudely and negligently, as well as on thoſe that altogether omit it. Let not ſuch careleſs ones imagine, they have hitherto rendred due obedience to this command. For conſider, when a Duty is enjoyned, all that is neceſſary in order thereto is thereby enjoyned, and the right manner of performing it alſo. Thus when we are commanded to pray to God, by that very command we are engaged to get the knowledge of God, and to believe that he can hear and help us, and alſo to be reverent and ſerious in our prayers: for without theſe and the like qualifications we may ſay over many words, but we cannot properly be ſaid to *pray*. Thus when Chriſt commands us to eat Bread, and drink Wine in remembance of him, he hereby commands us to get our hearts into ſuch a frame, that we may be fit and able to remember him with thoſe affections, and in that manner that it beſeems ranſomed men to remember their Redeemer. And therefore we muſt know him, and be ſenſible of our own ſlavery, and be willing to be Redeemed by him, and be thankful for his love, with the other qualifications which I have before ſhewn to be

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neceſſary to, and included in our rememembrance of him. If you make a Feaſt on purpoſe to entertain a Friend, you thereby ſuppoſe not onely that he ſhould come to your Table, but that he ſhould come with a ſtomach to eat of your proviſions. And when Chriſt invites men to his Table, where he hath provided ſpiritual food under the outward Elements, do you not think he requires all that come, that they ſhould have an appetite to, and deſire after what he hath provided for them? Thus then have I laid open to you the flat command of Chriſt, whereby you are required to put your ſelves in a right poſture, and come to this Feaſt which he hath ordained in his Church, as a memorial of the Redemption he wrought for it. Whether you will obey it or not I cannot tell, I leave that to your choice; if you have any reaſon that ſeems ſtronger than the will of Chriſt, do as you ſhall think fit; onely remember the command I have been urging upon you, was given you by that Jeſus who will be your Judge, and whoſe ſentence will paſs according to that word, whereof this command is a part; and if you think you have got any ſuch excuſe, as will bring you off clear at that day, though you be found guilty of contemning his Law, I have no more to ſay, but at your own peril be it: Here I have given you faithful warning.

Here I may farther add, that you have not onely Chriſt's command, but the *example of his Apoſtles, Diſciples, and the Primitive Chriſtians* to engage you to this duty, wherein they were all conſcientious and frequent, *Acts* 2. 42. They that were converted by the preaching of the Apoſtles *continued ſtedfaſtly in their doctrine and fellowſhip, in breaking of bread, and in prayers.* And this you may find was the practice of the Church of *Corinth* (and by conſequence of all other Churches then planted) in that the Apoſtle rectifies the abuſes

they were guilty of therein, as you may find at large, 1 *Cor.* 11. 17. to the end. And are not we to walk as we have these for an example, and to be followers of them as they are of Christ? Moreover, they that are skill'd in Church-History tell us, that it is most certain, it was the custom of the primitive Christians, usually to celebrate this Sacrament every Lord's day at least. And by the way take notice, though we have no particular precept in Scripture how frequently we ought to do it, yet from thence we are taught, that it ought to be done more than once; and the practice of those who best knew the mind of Christ may inform us, that it ought to be done often; though the particular times are left to the prudence of Church-governours.

2. In the next place I would wish you well to consider, whether you have not good reason to conclude, *that you shall receive much advantage from the performance of that duty, which is recommended to you by the express command of Christ, and the example of his first followers.* Was there nothing else to be shewed but a command from him, whom you acknowledge your Soveraign, one would think it enough to silence all objections, and bring you to obedience. But do you not moreover believe, that Christ designed the good of his Servants by the institution of this Sacrament in his Church? are any of his Commands grievous or unprofitable? Is not the whole design of Christian Religion evidently for our interest, if we believe we have immortal Souls? And can you imagine this one duty to be an exception from all the rest? as having nothing in it which may make it worthy our performance. Hath not he backt his Commands with Promises, that we might have all kind of encouragement to his Service? Hath not he told us, that to those *who keep his Commandments he will manifest himself?* Do you think then, that when

when Christ first set up this Sacrament, he hereby intended any advantage to those who should celebrate it? If not, he appointed them a meer piece of drudgery, in some respect worse than the Jewish Ceremonies (for they had their use to the Spiritual) and even as bad as those burdensome ridiculous Ceremonies, which make up so great a part of the Popish Religion; but if you dare not affirm this, then I would know, whether the same advantages do not still continue to this Ordinance, which were first intended to be communicated by it to the worthy Receiver? Again, did the Apostles and their companions get any good by it, think you? If not, it's strange they should be so exact and frequent in it; if they did, fain would I know why the same good is not still to be got by serious diligent Christians. Certainly God's treasures of Grace are not spent, his fountain is not drawn dry, nor never will be. He that will be the everlasting portion of his People, when this World is ended, hath enough sure in himself for the supply of all their necessities, whilst they are travelling through the World. When millions of Saints have received that Grace which leads them to Glory, there is not a jot the less for those that come after. And as his Graces are not exhausted, so neither is the way of giving them forth changed; in the same manner that his Spirit accompanied the Word and Sacraments, at any time since the Gospel was publish'd, in the same manner it accompanies them still, for ought that any man living can shew to the contrary. *Christ is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever.* He who will be with his Ministers 'till the end of the World, will be with his Ordinances 'till then, and with his people in the conscientious use of them. Why should the first Christians be tied to that which we in after-ages may neglect? Is not our case the same with theirs? Are not our necessities as

great? And may not our profitings alſo, if the fault be not our own? To proſecute this a little farther, as I promiſed. Is not the death of Chriſt as great a mercy to us in theſe latter days of his Church, as it was to them in the firſt? Have not we the ſame pardon offered to us, the ſame promiſes given, the ſame Heaven prepared, and the ſame ſanctifying Spirit to bring us thereto? Have we not then the ſame cauſe to be frequently mindful of, and thankful for theſe mercies, and the Death that purchas'd them, in all ways preſcribed to that purpoſe? Are not we ſtill of the ſame nature that men were then? Such whoſe affections are moſt raiſed and quickened by ſenſible things, by the help whereof we can with greater clearneſs and power conceive of things ſpiritual; and can more affectionately remember what's paſt, when we ſee it repreſented and acted afreſh before our eyes. Is it not therefore our wiſdom and duty to accept of ſuch aſſiſtances as our Lord himſelf, in his care of us, hath afforded? Whereof the Sacrament of his Supper is a principal one, every way fitted for that end. Were they more dull than we, that they ſhould neeed ſuch quickning means which we judge our ſelves paſt the uſe of? Had not we as much need as they to be frequently renewing our more ſolemn repentance for ſin, and covenantings with God, that ſo the conſideration of thoſe renewed engagements we lye under, may the more overpower us to faithfulneſs and perſeverance in his ſervice? Are not our wants of Grace as great as theirs: And therefore ought we not to wait in all thoſe ways whereby theſe wants may be ſupplied? which are the ſame now as formerly. Is it not as rich a mercy now as ever, to have all the bleſſings and priviledges of the covenant of Grace, whether temporal, ſpiritual, or eternal, not onely repreſented, but made over and aſſured to us, in ſuch a familiar manner? Is

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not the exerciſe and ſtrengthening of mutual brotherly love, by the maintaining of the moſt endearing Chriſtian communion, ſtill a moſt pleaſant and profitable duty? now eſpecially, when all men have learn'd to cry out, how cold Charity is grown? Thus you ſee there are very many, and thoſe no ſmall advantages that accrue to ſuch as carefully mannage this weighty duty, and all of them continue ſtill the ſame that they were in the time of the Apoſtles. And let there be any other ground of their practice aſſigned, or any other benefit which they hereby enjoyed, and I queſtion not to prove, that we have the ſame, or the like grounds, and are capable of the ſame benefits with them. Thus have I ſhewn you, that to come in a due manner to the Lord's Table is both your duty and your intereſt; there is a command given by your Lord, obliging you to what is good for your ſelves, (and indeed ſo do all other his commands if well weighed.) And what more can be ſaid to work upon men that have any Conſcience, or any ſelf-love, to give obedience? Wherefore if you be Chriſtians, yea, if you be men; if you have any ſenſe of God's authority, or of your own neceſſities, make all poſſible haſt out of that dangerous woful eſtate which makes you unfit for, and unwilling to this ſo profitable a duty; and your Souls being made ready, let them bring your bodies hither. Having been larger in theſe, I ſhall be brief in thoſe that follow.

3. It is much to be feared, that *whilſt you ſlight the Sacrament, you ſlight thoſe bleſſings which hereby are repreſented, and aſſured to Believers.* You your ſelves would judge ſo by others in caſes like this. If the King ſhould proclaim, that he will give Eſtates in ſome of his Plantations to all that will come to the Court, and take Patents from him, and ſubſcribe their Names to a Bond, which onely ties them to acknowledge they had

their Eſtates from his bounty, and to live there according to his Laws: is it not a ſign, that they who will not do thus much, do very little care for the Eſtates that are offered them? and do not they manifeſt as little regard of Heaven it ſelf, and all the promiſes of the Goſpel, who are loath to be at ſo much pains, as to go to the Sacrament, there to have all theſe confirmed to them? being unwilling to bind themſelves hereby to thankfulneſs and obedience to that God, who makes them ſuch large and bounteous offers. He that refuſeth a cheap and eaſie Medicine, which being duly taken may recover him from his ſickneſs, may well be ſaid to undervalue his health. Thus it is too apparent, that thou little regardeſt the health of thy Soul, whilſt thou ſlighteſt thoſe means, which, through the bleſſing of the great Phyſician upon the careful uſe of them, might tend ſo much to thy healing and ſtrengthening. If a Shilling be offered me in earneſt of a thouſand Pound to be given upon ſome certain conditions, if I refuſe to to take it, it is not ſo much the Earneſt as the greater Sum that I thereby reject. Thus Heaven is aſſured to thee upon condition of thy faith and obedience, and if thou likeſt it upon theſe terms, the Sacrament ſhall be given thee in Earneſt, but if thou wilt not take the Earneſt, thou putt'ſt away from thee everlaſting life. If a condemned man tear in pieces the King's pardon which is brought to him, his fault is not ſo much the tearing of a piece of Paper, as his contempt of the Pardon. Thus ſhall it be laid to thy charge, not meerly the deſpiſing a bit of bread and a ſup of wine, but thy ſlighting all thoſe rich and unvaluable bleſſings which hereby were offered and aſſured to Believers. If indeed thou prizeſt theſe, ſhew it by thy ſetting a due eſteem upon that which hath ſo near a relation to them; but if thou value them not, think not much if thou go without them for ever:

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for whom canſt thou blame, if thou miſs of thoſe things which thou careſt not for?

4. *Is not this neglect a ſad ſign, that thou performeſt no duty as thou oughteſt, nor to thoſe ends thou ſhouldeſt?* for if thou did'ſt rightly improve any, why ſhould'ſt thou not be glad of all? Art thou not ready to try all courſes, and uſe all means for the continuance and increaſe of thy outward welfare? and yet thou thinkeſt every thing too much that's enjoyned thee for thy Spiritual advantage, and therefore comeſt not to this Ordinance, as thinking thou mayſt do well enough without it. They that are in health uſe not to ſay, if they have one ſort of food, what ſhall they do with another? or if they eat one Meal in a day, why need they eat another? and yet this is thy language in reference to thy Soul. So long as thou haſt been baptized, and comeſt to Church, and ſayſt thy Prayers (and it's well if thou do thus much) why may not this ſerve thy turn without coming to the Sacrament? Why tell me, pray thee, what's thy deſign in theſe duties? Is it to get good to thy Soul? That thou mayſt grow in Grace, and get fitter for Glory? If it be, why then is not every duty acceptable to thee, which would help on this deſign? but is it not rather to be fear'd, that theſe are done out of cuſtom without expecting, and therefore without finding any great advantage from them? and becauſe the neglect of that duty I am urging thee to, is too common, and ſo no great matter of diſgrace, therefore thou makeſt ſo light of it. And withall, perhaps there is ſomewhat more pains requiſite to prepare thee for it, and therefore out of meer ſloth and lazineſs thou holdeſt off. Oh that thou waſt but ſet in as good earneſt, to inrich thy Soul with Grace, as the moſt of men, and its like thou thy ſelf art, to grow rich in the world! How many ways will they wind and turn to get a little Gain? If one

course will not serve they'l take another; and if that fail, they'l try a third; what they miss in one bargain, they'l seek to make amends for in the next. Thus would it be with thee, wast thou a diligent Christian: thou would'st turn every stone, seek every corner for the Pearl of price. Didst thou once by experience know the worth and excellency of true Grace, and the satisfying sweetness of conversing with God, thou would'st be very diligent in the use of all those means whereby these advantages are to be attained: what thou had'st got at one duty, would prompt thee to another, in hopes to find the like; or if thou hast mist of thy hopes in one, it will put thee upon another, there to get satisfaction. If thou found'st thy self at a distance from God, or under fears of his displeasure, thou would'st never be at rest with thy self 'till thou had'st found him, whom thy Soul loved, and had'st got a renewed sense of his love to thy soul: in all those ways wherein he gives a comfortable meeting to his people, wouldst thou give constant attendance, ever earnestly waiting for the gracious and comfortable manifestations of himself in thy Soul. But since thou canst so contentedly miss one Priviledge, and that of so great importance, it's a shrewd sign that thou improvest not any as thou oughtest; and what a wretched starven case then must thy Soul needs be in?

5. Consider *what a shame it is that thou shouldest be thus regardless of the provisions made for thy Soul, whilst thou art so greedy and forward after any thing that makes for the gratifying of thy flesh.* Generally in the World men refuse no pains to supply their bodily necessities, and yet when here is food provided to their hands, they have no mind to it, because this is onely suted to their souls. How eagerly can they hunt after that which they are never like to obtain, or which, if they do, will never sa-

ſatisfie and fill them, whilſt they put away from them the ſavoury meat which God hath brought to them: which would be ſavoury if their taſte was not ſpoiled. Whilſt *Manna* is loathed that falls before the tent-door, how do they long after the *Garlick* and *Onions*, and *Fleſhpots of Egypt!* May I not juſtly ſay that the *Table of Devils* is more frequented than the *Table of the Lord?* Though men now adayes do not offer Sacrifices to Devils, as thoſe Idolaters did, of whom the Apoſtle ſpeaks, yet do they not ſacrifice to their own luſts? And is not this as accepable ſervice to the Devil, and as provoking to God? And do they not maintain a fellowſhip with Devils, whilſt their nature is ſo conformable, and their lives ſo ſubject to them? Such are all ſwiniſh Epicures, who ſerve their own belly rather than the Lord Jeſus. Oh what multitudes have we got of ſuch voluptuous ones, who had rather bring ſickneſs upon their bodies, and damnation upon their Souls by pleaſing their greedy unſatiable Throat, than come to refreſh and ſtrengthen themſelves with ſuch food, as through the Spirit of life accompanying it, will preſerve both ſoul and body to everlaſting life. *Wiſdom* in vain ſends forth her Embaſſadors, to ſtand in the higheſt places of the City, to call paſſengers to the banquet ſhe had made, whilſt yet the deſtroyer of Souls is hearkned to, calling them off from the right way, telling them, that *ſtoln waters are ſweet, and bread eaten in ſecret is pleaſant:* and with theſe unlawful pleaſures do fooliſh ſinners glut themſelves, not remembring, that he doth but feed them for the ſlaughter, and that *his gueſts are in the depths of hell*, Pro. 9. Oh how will this aggravate the condemnation of the prophane in our days, that whilſt they could not be kept out of the Alehouſe and Tavern, but lay there day and night, drinking away their wit, their money, and oftentimes their life it ſelf,

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yet no entreaties could bring them duly to prepare themselves, and come to eat and drink at the Lord's own Table. Hadst thou but such a favour offered thee as *Haman*, to be entertained at a banquet with the King and Queen, how forwardly wouldest thou accept it, and with what pride wouldest thou boast of it, as he did? But yet when the King of Glory invites thee to be his Guest, thou thinkest not his invitations worth hearkning to, so mean are thy thoughts of his company and fare. Yea, dost thou not see how importunate Beggars are for an Alms? They come to thy door, and stand begging for Bread, and will hardly be driven away empty: and yet when thou art thus begged to accept Bread that comes from Heaven, thou wilt not receive it. Here men must be compell'd, that is, importunately woo'd to come in, and yet they will not be prevailed with: or if they do come, it is oftentimes in such a careless manner, that gives as much displeasure to him who sent for them, and brings as much mischief upon themselves as if they had stayd away. But of this I spake in the beginning, wherefore I shall onely add, that it is to me a matter of astonishment, that those who know their bodies will shortly be in the Grave, and who say they verily believe their Souls must live for ever, that those very men should with so much care and unweariedness feed and maintain their Bodies, whilst willingly and out of meer sloth, they suffer their immortal Souls to starve and perish eternally.

6. Consider, *this is a juncture of time wherein especially thou art engaged to do all that in thee lies, toward the speedy securing of thy everlasting happiness*; and therefore in the most solemn manner, to consecrate thy self to God at the Sacrament, there renouncing all the ways of wickedness whereby thou hast provoked him, that so thy peace may be made with him. For consider how

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he hath lately appeared in judgment againſt us, and ſhewn, that he hath a ſore controverſie with us: and ſhall not we, the ſurviving inhabitants of the Land, learn righteouſneſs hereby? Shall not we be ſo wiſe, as to meet him in the way, before his anger be kindled againſt us in particular? It is to be feared, the neglect of this very duty, and the groſs miſcarriages in the manner of performing it, have done much toward the haſtning of thoſe judgments we have lain under. And ſhall not this teach thee what to do for the future? Wilt thou go on to provoke the Lord to jealouſie? ſo that his anger ſhould not be turned away, but his hand ſtretched out ſtill. And if thou art one, who haſt lately been preſerved from the very Graves mouth, whereinto thou waſt ready to fall, being in continual expectation of Death, through the *Viſitation*, or any other diſtemper, I would wiſh thee to look back, and conſider what were the thoughts of thy heart at that time; thou, I mean, who haſt lived a looſe and careleſs life? Did not thy Conſcience fly in thy face for all thy wickedneſs? And didſt thou not reſolve, that if God ſhould ſpare thee, thou wouldſt become a new man, and lead another kind of life than thou haſt done? Did it not terrifie thee to remember how thou hadſt neglected praying, hearing, and receiving Sacraments? And didſt thou not make promiſes within thy ſelf, that, if God would try thee once again, it ſhould be no more thus? But that thou wouldſt be as diligent and conſtant therein for the time to come, as thou hadſt been ſlack and negligent before. Well now, God hath tried thee according to thy deſire: thou who might'ſt have been ſent to the place where Repentance will do no good, art yet kept upon Earth, to ſee what will be the fruit of thy afflictions, where yet thou art within the reach of mercy, if thou throw not thy ſelf out of it. What then

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ſhall become of all thy good purpoſes and promiſes? Are they gone as ſoon as thy ſickneſs and pain are gone? Are they all forgotten already? Yet be thou ſure God will remember them: and fain would I peſwade thee to remember them too; and now in particular, having prepared thy Soul to addreſs thy ſelf to the Lord's Table, and there renew all thoſe vows and reſolutions which thou madeſt in the time of ſickneſs and danger; and humbly implore mercy and pardon for thy former careleſneſs, and all thy tranſgreſſions, and help from God to walk more cloſely with him for the future: Let me now in ſeaſon be thy Remembrancer from the Lord, and bring to mind what Engagements thou haſt made to him, and ſee thou be faithful to them: But if they be ſlighted, and all that I have ſaid to thee be ſlighted, becauſe now thou art luſty and well, and ſeeſt no death near thee, and haſt ſomething elſe to do, than to trouble thy ſelf with being ſo religious, as dying men uſe to be, yet let it ſink into thy thoughts, that there is juſt ſuch another time coming upon thee; very ſhortly thou wilt be ſick again, and caſt upon thy death-bed; and doſt thou not think the very ſame thoughts will then come into thy mind again? When thou ſhalt conſider thy ſelf juſt lanching forth into eternity, and ſhalt look back upon all thy ungodly deeds, and thy undervaluing the means of Grace, by an improvement of which thou mighteſt have been made ready for ſuch an hour as this, wilt thou not then begin again to fall to wiſhing that it had been otherwiſe, and to purpoſing thou wilt be better hereafter, if once again thou mayſt be recovered. But when thy Conſcience with a redoubled fury, ſhall riſe up and bid thee remember, how thou didſt long ago, in the ſame condition, ſeem as penitent as this comes to, but yet all came to nothing, and that therefore thou haſt no reaſon to expect a farther tryal; and ſhall moreo-

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ver tell thee, that it is moſt likely all this is out of meer ſlaviſh fear, and not out of any true love to God and Holineſs; how wilt thou be able to hold up under ſuch a dreadful charge as this from thy own awakened Conſcience? It is *my* great deſire to prevent thy being then overwhelmed with ſuch thoughts as theſe; and if *thou* art but as willing, they may be effectually prevented, even by ſpeedily ſetting upon ſuch a courſe, as will be the rejoycing of thy Soul at that day, when nothing elſe will rejoyce thee, but the teſtimony of God's Spirit witneſſing with thy Conſcience, that by the Grace of God thou haſt had thy converſation in ſimplicity and Godly ſincerity. For without this it would be but a poor refuge for thee, to call for a Sacrament on thy death-bed, who didſt ſlight it in thy health.

7. Conſider, *whether by this thy contempt of the Ordinances of Chriſt, thou mayſt not provoke him juſtly to withdraw them from us*, and to beſtow them upon a people that will more prize, and frequent, and better improve them, than we have done. If Children be ſo indifferent to their food, that they play with it, or throw it away, it's fit it ſhould be taken from them. When people are wanton and curious, that they know not how to be pleaſed, but upon the leaſt diſlike reject their Spiritual food, it's a ſign they want the beſt of Sawces, a good Stomach, which it's juſt they ſhould be brought to by being kept ſhort. Or if they be ſo lazy, that they think it more adoe than needs, to be diligent in thoſe exerciſes of Religion, which our Lord hath appointed, and take the greateſt priviledges for burdens, is it not juſt they ſhould be eaſed of them? for who will continue kindneſſes to thoſe, who take them for injuries? Yea, can they expect any other, than ere long to be removed into a World, where they ſhall never more be troubled with ſuch heavy impoſitions? You that are now ready

to

to say what a stir's here with Sermons, Prayers, and Sacraments? and think all your time lost that's spent in them, and are vext to think, that you must have so many interruptions from your sins or worldly business; be content a while, and you shall have no cause long to complain of these things you now judge so grievous. There's none of this adoe in the Hell your ungodliness leads to; but whether there be not sadder things there, your Experience ere long is like to give you full conviction, if nothing sooner will convince you. Do but judge reasonably, must it not needs be an high displeasure to God, to see his Creatures contemn the most precious mercies, as if they were nothing worth? How would you take it, if, when out of courtesie you had invited a poor man to your Table, and had made ready the best that could be had for him, he should find fault with your meat, and ask you why you troubled him to come from home to such a poor Dinner as this? would you think he deserved to have the worst bit there? If your Landlord, or any rich neighbour should bid you to a Feast, would you send word by his Servant, that he had nothing worth coming for, but that you could provide for your self better at home? Or if you should send such word, do you think you should be invited twice? And yet thus sawcy and unthankful have you been toward the great God, whilst you have kept away from his Table; notwithstanding which, he hath again, and again sent forth his Servants to invite you thither, in that way and to those ends which he hath revealed. But, oh Sirs, do no more so foolishly, so impudently, I beseech you, lest at length you should move God to withdraw from you the mercies you trample on; and you, when it is too late, should be put to seek with tears those blessings which once you cared not for, and therefore must never have.

8. *Is*

8. *Is it not a very great ſign, that you forget Chriſt himſelf*, whilſt you can thus quietly paſs from year to year without remembring him at the Sacrament? could you poſſibly do thus if you bore him upon your minds, and were ſenſibly affected with the frequent thoughts of all his love towards you? Would you not then take all opportunities to expreſs this your thankful ſenſe of his kindneſs? The Children of *Iſrael*, we read, were enjoyned to keep the Feaſt of the Paſſeover, as a memorial of their deliverance out of *Ægypt*; and, if when they were come into *Canaan*, they ſhould after a few years have left it off, might not God juſtly have tax'd them with forgetting their deliverance it ſelf? and is not the caſe much what the ſame here? So we find, *Exod.* 12. 26, 27. that when their children ſhould ſee them keeping this Feaſt, and ask what the meaning was, they were to anſwer, *It is the ſacrifice of the Lord's Paſſover, who paſſed over the houſes of the children of Iſrael in Ægypt, in that night when he ſmote the Ægyptians, and delivered our houſes.* If now theſe Children, when they were of capacity, ſhould refuſe to keep this Feaſt, as they were commanded, is it not a ſign that either they believed not what their Parents told them, or elſe thought there was nothing in it worth the remembrance? Thus if any of you ſhould demand what's the meaning of our aſſembling together at certain times, to eat and drink Bread and Wine in ſo ſerious a manner, it may be anſwered you, *This is the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which he appointed in the night wherein he was betrayed, for a memorial of that death, whereby he deſtroyed the kingdom of Satan, and delivered his people.* If you now take this to be true, and think it deſerves any ſolemn Remembrance, come as you have been directed, and joyn with the reſt in this work; if you refuſe this, you can never ſure have the face to ſay, that you

do

do in your hearts remember Christ. If one that had bestowed some great matters upon the Town he lived in, should order at his death, that the Inhabitants of that Town should, upon a certain day in the year, meet together at a Feast, to keep up the memory of his bounty; if they neglected this, might it not well be said they forgot their Benefactor? And does not your neglect of this Sacramental Feast, as plainly shew a forgetfulness of your great Benefactor who ordained it? Oh wonderful! that ever men who have heard, who Jesus Christ is, and what he hath done, should be thus unmindful of him. Ah Sirs, read the History of his Life, think soundly of his Death, and consider then, whether he thus deserves to be forgotten by you. Had he had no more thought of us, where had we now been, and what had become of us for ever? Hath he done so much for you, even without your seeking, and when he requires so little of you, is he denied? If but a dying Friend should take his Ring off his finger, and put it on yours, and bid you look on that Ring, and remember him, should you not easily do it? But much more, if this Friend had upon any account given up himself to die for your preservation, and should onely engage you by remembring him, to beware of that fault whereby your life was endangered, and his was lost; would not the memory of such a friend be ever fresh, and precious with you, if you had any humanity, any sense of friendship and kindness? And would not your Bowels be even turned within you, whenever you beheld this Ring? But alass! how far comes this short of the kindness which Christ hath shewn to poor sinners, in many circumstances, as might easily be shewn? And yet how is all disregarded with the most? How few obey this, that was one of his last injunctions to his followers, before he offered up himself on their behalf, that they should

feed

feed on his body and blood here represented, and remember and love him, who was bruised and poured forth as an Attonement for them, and set themselves against the sins that occasioned all this. Can men be guilty of worse Ingratitude?

9. If then Christ be so far from your thoughts, that you take no pleasure in the Remembrance of him, *Bethink you before-hand how you will be able to look him in the face, when you shall be cited to appear before him whether you will or not.* Be assured, whoever thou art, to whom the memory of Christ is no way delightful, to thee his presence will be most terrible. If thou hast been well pleased to have him as absent from thy heart, as his bodily presence is from the world, thou wilt never know how to abide the terrour of his appearance; and yet abide it thou must. It will then be with thee just as it was with that wicked Servant whom we read of, *Luk.* 12. 45, 46. who instead of looking to his Masters Family in his absence, to give them their portion of meat in due season, as he was commanded, *ver.* 42. thinks within himself, that his Lord delays his coming, and therefore begins to eat and drink, and be drunken, and what follows? *Why the Lord of that Servant will come in a day that he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and appoint him his portion with hypocrites and unbelievers.* Even thus mayst thou justly expect it will be with thee, who neglectest to take that portion of meat for thy Soul which Christ hath provided for thee, and hadst rather pamper thy flesh, and indulge it in gluttony and drunkenness. That very Jesus, whom thou takest no pleasure to remember, and could'st be very well content never to come nearer him, never to behold him, or to have any thing more to do with him, even he shall at length surprize thee by the suddenness of his dreadful appearance. Though

thou would'ſt not *Remember* him, yet then thou muſt, thou ſhalt *ſee* him. Though thou could'ſt caſt him out of thy *thoughts*, yet thou ſhalt not be able to avoid his *preſence*, 'till he himſelf ſhall have utterly baniſh'd thee from him. Though thou be unmindful of him, yet flatter not thy ſelf with a conceit that he'll forget this thy unworthy behaviour: no, but he'll remember it, to recompence it on thy own head in that day of his vengeance. As his people may firmly build upon it, that he'll never *forget their labour of love*, ſo may his enemies be ſure, that he will not forget their lazineſs, and want of love. Will it not be ſad for thee at that day, to call upon the rocks and mountains to hide thee from his face, and all in vain? And yet is it not juſt it ſhould be thus with thee, who art now call'd into Chriſt's gracious preſence, into the neareſt communion with him, and thou runneſt away, and wilfully hideſt thy ſelf, and wilt not be perſwaded to come in. Alas! Man, then expect other uſage from Chriſt than here thou foundeſt in the day of his patience, whilſt he waited to be gracious. He will not come then to offer pardons to the guilty, and to beſeech their acceptance of them, and of the Sacraments to ſeal them; no, but he will then onely abſolve all thoſe who have already got their pardon, and condemn thoſe who have not: wherefore if thou think'ſt it of any conſequence, to look Chriſt in the face with comfort at the laſt day, now get an acquaintance with him, put on thy wedding Garment of Repentance, Faith, and Love, and come hither to be his Gueſt: with an humble boldneſs come and feaſt with him, yea feed upon him, and let him be made familiar to thy Soul, that his coming may fill thee with joy, and not with horrour.

10. Laſtly, if after admonitions and invitations thou liveſt in the neglect of this duty, *do'ſt thou not give us too much ground to fear, that thou art no true Chriſtian?*

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I know it is not thy coming hither on any fashion that will sufficiently prove thee a good Christian; but yet thy total forbearance may rather make thee suspected to be none at all. For what hast thou to plead on thy own behalf? the greatest argument of thy Christianity is thy being babtized: but this was done in thy infancy, and who knows, whether thou stand'st to it or not, if thou wilt not publickly own that thou dost so? If it was the custom amongst us, that when a Father is listed into an Army, he should set down the Names of his Sons also, there to stand 'till they came to sixteen years of age, at which time they were to go in, and write their own Names, or else to be cashiered; if they, when they are come to these years, should refuse to give in their Names, do they not hereby shew that they have no mind to be Soldiers? And is it not a question whether thou ownest Christ Jesus for thy Captain, if thou wilt not make thy appearance with the rest, at times appointed for the acknowledgment of thy relation to him? If the King should command all that were of age in a Town, to come to the Market place, and there take the Oath of Allegiance, if they would be held for good Subjects, how would they be look'd upon, who should stay away and refuse to do it? Now have I not before shewn, how expres the command of Christ is to all his Disciples, that, beside all other duties, being rightly prepared, they should celebrate this Sacrament in remembrance of him, as an evidence and Symbol of their relation to, and communion with him? How then can we hold them for true Disciples, that reject and slight it? But here give me leave, according to my promise, to meet with two or three Objections against the performance of this duty, before I come to give Directions for it.

CHAP. XII.

Sacraments are not to be accounted vain, because Externals.

1. *Obj.* PErhaps then some in the first place may say, *what need have we of such outward shadows & ceremonies, so long as we have the substance, Christ himself, and do truly believe in him? What good can we get by such external services as these? These are low beggarly things, not suited to these more spiritual times of the Gospel.*

Though I have before said enough to this, yet because there are those who confidently talk at this rate, and are very busie in perverting common people, I shall say something farther by way of answer to it.

Ans. 1. And first I would demand of you, who is fit to be Judge in this case, what you ought to do, and what not? Are you Servants, or are you your own Masters? *Came the Word of God forth from you?* Was Christian Religion something of your devising, that you may frame it, and appoint the duties of it as you shall see best? *Or came this Word to you only?* Did he who revealed it to the world priviledge you to pick and chuse some duties, and omit others, as you saw good? If you say yes, pray produce your license, and let us see it; for we find no such thing recorded in that Word, which we all acknowledge to come from God. And if you have got any private orders contrary thereto, give us sufficient evidence to prove them of Divine Authority, and then we shall be silent. But 'till then it must needs be accounted strange impudence, for silly worms to quarrel with the institutions of infinite wisdom. For if God's authority may be regarded, rather than the fond opinion of proud and giddy men, we need not be to seek what to

do

do in this matter, Christ having so plainly commanded us, to *do this in remembrance of him*, as I have before shewed.

2. And since there is such a command, I wonder how it can be accounted an unprofitable thing to obey it? Is there no profit in pleasing God? And can we please him any other way, than by obeying his Commands? Let the matter of the Command be what it will, if we know it be given us by God, that's warrant enough for our practise, & ground for our expectation of benefit by it, though we could not much see the reason of the thing in it self abstracted from the command, (though here the case is otherwise, as I have also before manifested.)

3. If any should say, we now lie under no obligation to this duty, let them shew where Christ's command to his Disciples is repealed, or where there is the least intimation given, that there was a time to come when it should be out of date, and cease to oblige our Consciences. Nay, are we not taught there was no such time to come? For do we not find the reason and end of this Ordinance assigned to be such, as will make it necessary to the last day? And this is to prevent all exception plainly expresst; *Hereby you shew forth Christ's death 'till he come*, 1 Cor. 11.26.

4. Do not they who tell us the Sacraments are but shadows, and therefore now to cease, hereby pretend a new dispensation of the Gospel, purer and higher than that which was set up by Christ and his Apostles after the ceasing of the Levitical Worship? For long after this, we find Baptism and the Lord's Supper in use. Wherefore if they are now to be laid aside, is it not because that was but an Infant-state of the Church, where in such ceremonies were requisite, which are now needless, it being grown to greater maturity, and the members engaged to be more spiritual, and taken off from

thoſe carnal ſervices, wherein ſuch mean perſons as the Apoſtles and their followers were converſant? But do not they notoriouſly violate the truth, as well as modeſty, who tell us this? Do we either in the Old Teſtament, or New, meet with any Propheſies, that intimate to us a new diſpenſation, or different way of ordering the Chriſtian Church, after Chriſt had fully eſtabliſh'd it? We find ſuch frequently as to the Jewiſh Ceremonies, but no where, that I know, relating to any Laws or Orders that Chriſt hath appointed. And none, I hope, will ſay our Sacraments were like them, of a typical nature, and ſo to ceaſe by the coming in, and accompliſhment of ſomewhat which they ſignified. Though the firſt diſpenſation under *Moſes* was imperfect, yet where are we allowed to find fault with the ſecond introduced by Chriſt? Is not this Goſpel-ſtate the Kingdom that cannot be moved, in oppoſition to the Jewiſh ſtate of things, which was ſhaken and removed? as we may probably interpret *Heb.* 12. 26, 27. Wherefore they who would make us believe, that in theſe latter days the Church is to be reformed, not onely from the corruptions men brought in, but from the Ordinances which Chriſt ſet up, what do they but trouble us, by endeavouring to pervert the Goſpel of Chriſt? approaching too neer to thoſe, whom the Apoſtle ſo vehemently pronounced accurſed, *Gal.* 1. 9. Thoſe indeed would have brought in cuſtoms which Chriſt had abrogated, and theſe would abrogate ſuch as he hath ordained; and when we remember who ordained them, it may ſufficiently awe us from ſlighting them, though they may ſeem but leſſer matters, and, as it were, appendages to Religion. And it ſhould make all ſober Chriſtians the more afraid, of hearkning after any new and more ſpiritual diſpenſations of the Goſpel, when we remember the unſpeakable miſchief, which this

ground

groundleſs pretence hath done, and may do to the Church. Under this notion the *Familiſts* vent their horrid fancies; and even *Mahomet* himſelf made uſe of this pretence, when he firſt ſet up in the world: and ſo any man that hath a mind to advance ſome new way, which he can find no ground for in the Goſpel, may pretend that it is ſomething higher and more excellent than Chriſt thought fit at firſt to reveal, but now in theſe laſt days he hath ſent him as his Meſſenger to publiſh it to the world. And as well may we hearken to any ſuch Impoſture, as to thoſe who tell us, that though, it's true, Chriſtians at the firſt were Babtized, and received the Lord's Supper, yet now we have nothing to do with theſe things, being arrived to a more perfect ſtate than they were acquainted with.

5. How unreaſonable is it, that they ſhould oppoſe thoſe things which ſo well agree together, and mutually promote each other? whilſt they ſay they believe in Chriſt, and therefore regard not this piece of outward ſervice. But I wonder where they find, that faith in Chriſt may excuſe a man from receiving the Sacrament, I ſhould think it rather engaged him to it. Far be it from me to to preſs this duty, as that which will give men the leaſt diſpenſation to neglect any other; nay, I hope, I have ſufficiently ſhewed all along, that I preſs it as a ſtrong obligation, motive, and help to holineſs, both of heart and life. Hither ſhould men come purpoſely to exerciſe and ſtrengthen their Graces, and therefore it's a moſt fooliſh thing to ſay they have got Grace in their hearts, and will thereupon ſtay away. If you believe in Chriſt, come hither and profeſs that you do ſo, for ſo he hath bidden you to do; and be not ſo ridiculous as to ſay, becauſe you have faith, therefore you will not in this manner profeſs it. If a King ſhould command all his Subjects that would go to ſuch a

War, to come and set down their Names, and afterwards come and answer to them at a Mustering, would it not be a wise piece of business, for any of them to say, he would fight in the War, and therefore he would not have his Name set down, nor appear with the rest at the times of Mustering? And is it not much-what the same, for any to pretend they'l keep Covenant with Christ, and therefore will not make or renew it in that soleman manner he hath commanded? What? wilt thou say thou lovest Christ, and art sincerely thankful for his love, and therefore wilt not joyn with thy fellow-Christians, in the remembrance of his mercy and expression of thy Gratitude? Does this sound like reason? And yet no better is to be found in thy objection. Might not the Apostles far better have said, they needed not the help of this Sacrament, to put them in mind of Christ, who was ever fresh in their thoughts? But on the contrary, because he was so much in their thoughts, therefore they were so frequent in this duty. And was thy Spirit like theirs, thy practice would not be so contrary. And let me tell thee farther, it's much to be feared, thou hast little or no Grace at all, who slightest any way that Christ hath ordained, for the increase of Grace. A wise man useth not to say, I enjoy my health well, and therefore I care not for my food, since this is the means for continuance of his health. But it seems thou denyest, that thou canst get any good by this Ordinance, wherefore,

6. In the next place let me ask thee, Dost thou imagine thy self arrived to the utmost pitch of perfection, so that thou lookest upon all means and Ordinances as things below thee? If so, I cannot now stand to shew thee the pride and ignorance of this conceit, which are both so great, that it's danger thou wilt not be convinced of either. But wast thou indeed so excellent a crea-

ture as thou takeſt thy ſelf to be, yet methinks thou ſhould'ſt not imagine, that thou art above the exerciſe of Grace, or returning thanks for what thou haſt received, and even theſe reaſons may bring thee to the duty I am now pleading for. Or if this be none of thy conceit, do'ſt thou imagine that the Soul can get no good by external means, which work upon the ſenſes? If this be thy opinion, thou ſeemeſt not to conſider the nature and frame of man in this preſent ſtate, wherein bodily things do ſo mightily affect him, and he is beholden to his ſenſes for all, or almoſt all the knowledge which he hath. By this reaſon men could profit nothing by reading or hearing, which is contrary to all experience. And by this reaſon in the time of the Law no good was to be got by thoſe Ceremonies, that tipified Chriſt to come, which is a very bold aſſertion, and moſt unreaſonable; and I hope the clearer repreſentations of him, and his benefits in our Sacraments, have much the advantage of thoſe darker ſhadows.

7. Is it not very great impudence and ingratitude, when Chriſt hath choſen to deal with us in ſuch a ſenſible manner, as he ſaw moſt ſuitable to our natures, for us thereupon to call his Wiſdom and Goodneſs in queſtion? When he calls us to offer our bodies, as well as ſouls to him, and to glorifie him both with Soul and body, ſhall we ſay he cares not for bodily ſervice, and thereupon neglect all thoſe ſervices, wherein the body is employed? And when he out of indulgence to our weakneſs, hath provided external helps meet for us, ſhall we think our ſelves too high for them? Is not this moſt vile pride and ingratitude? And conſider whatever we dare to ſpeak in Diſparagement of Chriſt's Ordinances, as if they were empty uſeleſs things, will be found to reflect foully upon the honour of Chriſt himſelf the Law-giver.

8. Where

8. Where do we find any of the pious *Jews* before Christ's time, complaining of their Ceremonies as burdensome, unprofitable things? Afterwards indeed, when they were maintained in opposition to Christ, whom they led to, and ended in, they are call'd *beggarly Elements*, and carnal Ordinances; but we hear not of this language before. Though then God frequently express'd his very little regard to them, compared to the more substantial duties of the Moral Law, yet where read we any of the Godly of those days that rejected or disused them? And what, is our bondage forer than theirs? Hath Christ put a yoke upon his Disciples heavier than that he took off? and what do they better than say thus, who throw off his gracious institutions, as a burden too heavy for them to bear?

9. Methinks this is so like the language of Infidels, that all who have any mind to be thought Christians should abhor it. What wonder would it be for an Infidel to laugh at Baptism, or the Lord's Supper, if he should see them administred, and ask what Good was to be got from washing with water, or receiving a little Bread and Wine? But for one who pretends to own the authority of Christ, to speak after the same manner, seems something strange. If God give a command to wash in *Jordan* for the cure of a Leprosie, it beseems none but a Heathen *Naaman*, to ask whether *Abana* and *Pharphar*, Rivers of *Damascus*, are not as good as the Waters of *Israel*. And he discovers little more Religion, who shall saucily demand, why Bread and Wine at his own Table will not do his Soul as much good, as at the Sacrament.

10. I would fain know of these men, whether Christ had power to appoint an Ordinance of this kind, to the use of which, Christians in all succeeding Generations should be oblig'd? If they grant he had, as I suppose

poſe they dare not deny it, then let them ſay what he ſhould have ſaid or done more to lay this obligation upon them, than he hath done in the preſent caſe. If again they find fault with the nature of this Ordinance, as if it was not ſuited to be perpetual, becauſe of its unprofitableneſs, let them tell when it begun to be ſo. Was it from the firſt Inſtitution? or after a certain time? If from the beginning, what was it ordained for? why would Chriſt ſet up an Ordinance that was good for nothing? And why were the Diſciples ſo frequent in it? If afterwards, let them name the time, and give the reaſon of its degeneracy. But farther, was Chriſt able to make this Sacrament profitable to thoſe, who ſhould conſcientiouſly attend upon it? They who ſay it was not, muſt not take it ill to be thought Infidels: but if they yeild he was, then let them alledge ſome reaſon why he would not, or rather let them ſhew wherein he hath been wanting to it, to make it ſo profitable: If theſe fault-finders might have been at the firſt appointment hereof, what a kind of one would they have had it, that it might have been more uſeful than now they judge it is? Is not the death of Chriſt here ſet out before our eyes? and may not that in ſome ſort affect us, ſuppoſing we know the deſign of it, as well as diſcourſes that reach our ears? may not this awake us to lively thoughts of Chriſt, of the reaſon and ends of his death, and ſo quicken us to the exerciſe of repentance and faith, and ſtir us up to deſire after him, and to thankfulneſs for his love? and when our Souls are wrought into ſo good a frame, may we not reaſonably expect larger communications of Grace from that overflowing fountain of Goodneſs, who requires nothing more than a right diſpoſition in us that we may be made partarkers of his bounty. Not to mention how fit a way this is, for the conferring a right to, and giving aſſu-

rance

rance of relative and future priviledges.

11. Besides the Example of those in the first ages of the Church, methinks the daily experience of the generality of sober Christians may abundantly confute this conceit, that there is no good to be got by frequenting the Lord's Table; were these demanded one by one whether they had not found the contrary, I believe the most of them would profess they had; though through their own fault they would acknowledge, they had not hereby profited so much as they might. How many poor Souls have come in hither heavy and dull, and have gone away enlivened? How many have come dejected and sad, and have gone away refresh'd, and chear'd, and have long after enjoyed the benefit of this duty? But if they who make this objection, never found any such thing, it would speak more modesty and justice too, to lay the blame on themselves, rather than on the means which Christ hath afforded them.

12. Lastly, I would desire all that are impartial to consider, how plainly God hath witness'd against this sort of men, who are the chief patrons of that opinion I oppose, in suffering them to be so infatuated and besotted in their own minds; that, whilst they have impudently dar'd to reject the Ordinances of Christ as needless things, they themselves have doted upon the most ridiculous inconsiderable trifles, as if they were matters of some huge consequence. Have not those very men, who cry down the Lord's Supper and Baptism, of one sort or other, beside many other duties, as formal things; yet with a great deal of earnestness call'd upon us to say, *thou* rather than *you*, to a single person, not to call Men *Master*, nor put off our Hats one to another, with a multitude the like fopperies? These it seems are substantial things which they have devised, whilst Christ's own appointments are empty and carnal.

What's

What's this but a mark set upon them, (and few Sects are without one) to let the World know they came not from God, that none who are considerative might be endangered by their delusions? And let this suffice for Answer to the first Objection; whereon I have been the larger, in that it is of such ill consequence, and hath too far spread it self amongst giddy unstable people.

CHAP. XIII.

Against too seldom communicating in the Sacrament.

2. *Obj.* IN the next place some may say, *We have already received the Sacrament, and so have satisfied the command of Christ, and therefore may be excused from it for the future.*

I should scarce have dream'd of such an Objection, had I not heard it us'd; but to dispatch it in two words.

1. I have before acknowledg'd, that Christ hath not told us how frequently, or how oft in our lives we must perform this duty, but yet we may learn from the words of the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 11. 26. That it is to be done more than once: for saith he, *As often as you eat, &c. i.e.* every time that you eat. And then I have shew'd you what was the practice of the first Christians, which may well hold the place of a Rule in this case. Wherefore you ought to obey the injunction of your Pastor, so oft as he shall in prudence think meet to call you to the Lord's Table, since you have so much reason for obedience, and none to alledge for your refusal.

2. And in the next place, pray tell me, had you any reason for this duty when you first perform'd it? you'l scarce say no, I suppose; and if you had any, then I ask, whether the same reason does not still continue? If it does,

does, why should not your practise be continued agreeably thereto? Have you not still some necessities of soul which may here be supplied, as well as you had then? Is not the death of Christ as well worthy your remembrance now as formerly? and if you heretofore received any advantage by what you did, me thinks you should be the more inclin'd to hold on therein. But here perhaps some may reply, putting the objection in another shape, that they have often attended on this Ordinance, and yet have found no advantage by it, and therefore being out of heart and hope, are ready to throw it quite off. To whom I answer.

1. If it be thus indeed, you have great reason to acknowledge the fault is your own. Either you have not been so diligent in your operations as you ought, or else you have been careless afterward, thinking you had done when the work was over, as if no more was required to make a Sacrament strengthning to your Souls, than to make food nourishing to your bodies, barely to receive it, and there's an end; when as there is a serious consideration of what you have done, & a constant watchfulness afterwards, necessary to make it beneficial to you, as I may have occasion to shew anon. And especially see that you give not a kind of allowance to some pleasant sin or other, which you are hardly willing to be quite delivered from; such a secret partial cherishing of any lust whatever will be sure to keep you low and barren, and render all means unprofitable. And thus it is also like to be with you, if you are swallowed up in worldly businesses, or do too sweetly relish any sensible enjoyment.

2. You who complain you can get nothing by Sacraments, will say the same, I suppose by other means and duties; and will you therefore cast off these too? will you lay aside hearing and praying upon this pre-

tence?

tence? you may as well: for the reason holds as good for one as the other.

3. But farther, I would have you beware of mistaking your selves, imagining that you profit not when you do. And therefore consider what your expectations have been, and what you have found. Perhaps you have expected great joys, and as it were, sensible assurances of God's love, and to be afterward freed from all troubles and doubtings? or you have expected a perfect freedom from some troublesome temptations wherewith you use to be haunted, and from the very first motions of sin in your selves; and because you have found none of this in those measures you look'd for, therefore you conclude you have met with nothing? But this is no right arguing: for these are priviledges that you may go without all your days, and yet thrive under the means too; and therefore by them you cannot judge of your profiting: but if you can find the strength of sin broken, and your heart more set against it, and you are more throughly perswaded to comply with the whole will of God, being firmly resolved to keep close to him to the last, discovering more and more the emptiness of all creatures, and his All-sufficiency, being more prevalently and steadily bent to chuse him as your onely portion; if it be so, you may be sure you grow in Grace, and are bettered by the means you enjoy, and may be therefore encouraged to continue in the use of them.

4. But lastly, however it be with you, yet be you patient and constant in doing your work, and then leave the event to God. Wherein upon examination you find you have been wanting to your selves, be more careful for the future, in the due preparing and managing of your own hearts, and so wait upon God in his appointed way. Let your desires be carried out after that which

which is moſt needful for you, and which God hath promiſed to give, chiefly after Grace, and ſecondarily after comfort, remembring all you have is to come from the free mercy of a wiſe God, to whom you muſt refer it what meaſures of theſe you ſhall receive, and how ſoon it ſhall be. Only, I ſay, let it be your buſineſs quietly to wait his leiſure, in the uſe of thoſe means he hath preſcribed you, for which I might give many reaſons: but I ſhall wave all, onely demanding of you, whether thoſe ſpiritual bleſſings you ſo earneſtly long after are worth the waiting for? If you ſay no, you deſerve to go for ever without them: but if you grant they are, then pray tell me, wether it is more likely to attain them by waiting in that way wherein they are to be found or by turning out of it? This, I hope, is no difficult caſe to reſolve. If your friend be gone a journey, and you have a mind to meet him upon his return, are you not more likely to meet with him, by holding on ſtill in that Road which he'll be ſure to come, than by going back again, or turning to ſome by-path, meerly to gratifie your lazineſs or impatience? Wherefore when your hopes are at the loweſt ebb, it is moſt unreaſonable and fooliſh, to cry with that wicked King, *Why ſhould we wait on the Lord any longer? there is no hope, wherefore let us leave our duties, and caſt aſide all.* Be ſure there is no hope in ſuch a courſe as this, but rather a certainty of periſhing, whereas if there be ſafety in any way, it is in an obedient patient dependance upon God, yea, in this way there is certain ſafety; embrace it therefore as your wiſeſt, your onely courſe. Do but ſee that you wait for the Lord, and aſſure your ſelves you ſhall not be aſhamed, your eyes ſhall not always fail. Get into the Pſalmiſt's frame, *Pſalm* 130. 5,6. *To wait for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning*, and at length ſhall the Lord manifeſt himſelf to the joy of your

your ſouls, as ſure as the morning light will appear to thoſe who watch for it.

CHAP. XIV.

The objection of unfitneſs anſwered. As propoſed by the doubting and the careleſs.

3 *Obj.* SOme again there are, and thoſe not a few, that will be ready to ſay, *They find themſelves unfit for the Sacrament, and therefore dare not come leſt it prove to their hurt, rather than to their advantage.* Several ſorts of perſons may upon different grounds raiſe this objection. Firſt, the ſincere and humble Chriſtian, whoſe ſoul is in the dark, and through ignorance of himſelf, or not conſidering the tenour of the Covenant, and through the prevalency of temptation, or melancholly, he may without reaſon condemn himſelf, as if his eſtate was worſe than it is. To theſe I have ſomething to ſay.

1. Why is it, you judge your ſelves unfit for this Ordinance? Is it becauſe you are not ſo qualified as I have before ſhewn all Communicants ought to be? I am confident, upon a true enquiry, you will find the contrary: Wherefore be not haſty and raſh in paſſing a cenſure upon your ſelves, as if you were reſolved to comply with the deſign of Satan to keep you in ſorrow; but examine things ſoberly, and without paſſion, and then give judgment upon your ſtate according to true evidence. If you be found faithful Diſciples, and unfeigned lovers of Chriſt, you will grant your ſelves meet to come to that Feaſt which is made for ſuch. Tell me then in one word; are you not from your very Souls, willing that Chriſt ſhould be your Saviour, and take his own courſe with you, to bring you to God in Glory? Is

there any thing in all the world that your heart is ſet more upon than this, even that you may be ſaved by Jeſus Chriſt? would you not account the aſſurance of this a richer mercy, than to be made owners of the whole World? Yea, would you not give a thouſand ſuch Worlds as this if you had them, for the love of God in Chriſt? Is not this it which lies heavieſt upon your ſpirits, and makes you walk ſo ſadly, even the fears leſt you are without true Grace, and ſhould go without God and Chriſt for ever? And yet can the Devil ſo befool you, as to perſwade you all this while that you love not God? Have you got any thing here below more dear to you than his favour? Do you take delight in any courſe that you know is diſpleaſing to him? Do you not long to be made more conformable to him? To know and love, and enjoy him more, and do him better ſervice in the world? Would it not be the great joy of your ſouls always to walk cloſely with him, and retain a ſtrong ſenſe of his preſence, and all his excellencies upon your minds? To converſe with him more feelingly and powerfully, and in all your approaches to him, to be filled with a ſuitable reverence, humility, ſeriouſneſs, and all holy affections? Would any thing pleaſe you more than to pleaſe your God? Are you not then beſt at eaſe when you find your hearts moſt enlarged, and carried out after him? Had you not rather be following after God in the ways of holineſs, and the duties of Religion, than to enjoy all the pleaſures and merriments of ſenſual ones? Is there any duty from which you would be diſpenſed with? Any command that you would have aboliſh'd? Had you not infinitely rather your heart was brought up to the fulleſt compliance with it? Have you any luſt which you would fain be allowed to keep? Is it a trouble to you, that you muſt part with your ſins or elſe be damned for them? Or rather, Is it not your

greateſt

greateſt trouble, that you lived ſo long without God, and did ſo much againſt him in the days of your unregeneracy? And if you had that time to paſs over again, would you not prefer a life of the greateſt ſuffering before ſuch a life of ſinning? And is not your Soul really burdened with thoſe remnants of corruptions which you yet feel in your ſelves? Do you not ſtrive againſt them, and earneſtly deſire to be rid of them? Would you not account it a bleſſed priviledge, to be more free from ignorance, pride, earthlineſs, diſtruſt, ſelf-will, dullneſs, and diſtractions in holy duties? Would not a deliverance from theſe be more welcome, than to be freed from any outward afflictions you may lie under? All you that are ſincere (and to ſuch only I am now ſpeaking) cannot but acknowledge that the frame of your ſouls is ſuch as I have been enquiring after, how harſhly ſoever you may conclude of your ſelves notwithſtanding. And if ſuch as you, that love God and holineſs, hate ſin, and are humbled for it, have not right to the promiſes of mercy through Chriſt, I wonder who have? Why therefore will you not come to receive the ſeal to thoſe promiſes which do ſo evidently belong to you or none? But after all, perhaps you'l cry, you cannot *believe*, and therefore dare not come hither, ſince this is a Sacrament provided for *believers* only.

This Objection, I ſuppoſe, ariſeth principally from your miſtake of the nature of ſaving faith. Wherefore tell me, I pray, what do you mean when you ſay, you cannot believe. Do you not really believe, that the witneſs which the Scripture gives of Chriſt is true? Whatever temptations you may have to infidelity, yet is not this the prevalent perſwaſion of your minds, that Jeſus Chriſt is the true Meſſiah, by whom the fallen World is to be recovered out of its ruines? Do you not believe him furniſh'd with full power and authority

to accompliſh this deſign. Do you not believe that his death was ſufficient for the ranſom of the World, and all other truths concerning him that you find revealed in the Goſpel? And then are you not reſolved that this Jeſus ſhall be your Saviour, and none but he? Do you not from your hearts acknowledge your ſelves miſerable loſt creatures, altogether unable to reſtore your ſelves, or to do any thing that may ſatisfie God's juſtice, or in it ſelf deſerve recompence or acceptance? So that you are convinc'd, if ever you are ſav'd it muſt be through Chriſt; and are not you earneſtly deſirous of this above all things, that God for his Son's ſake would pardon and ſave you? Yea, more than that, are you not ſincerely willing that Chriſt ſhould rule in your hearts, and guide you by his Spirit, and frame you according to his will? Do you not account his commands holy, juſt, and good? And do you not deſire ſtrength from him your head to obey them, and to conquer all temptations from within and without that would draw you aſide? Do you not believe the promiſes which he hath made, and the threatnings which he hath denounc'd to be certainly true? And do you not deſire more, that you may have a ſhare in theſe promiſes, than enjoy any created good? And do you not fear his threatned wrath, more than any outward ſufferings? Is it thus with you, as I am confident it is, and yet will you cry out that you cannot believe? What can you not believe? Why, alas! you cannot believe you ſhall ever be ſav'd by Jeſus Chriſt. Is that it then which your believe onely ſticks at? But ſuppoſe it does, you are not therefore preſently Unbelievers in Scripture-ſtile, or in God's account. For this is not that which is ſo much preſt upon you: obſerve well the language of the Goſpel, which runs thus, *Believe in Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved,* not *believe that thou ſhalt be ſaved by Chriſt.* This

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abſolute perſwaſion of thy own ſalvation is not ſo much enjoyned thee, however not in the firſt place, but rather thy acceptance of Chriſt, that thou mayſt be ſaved by him. And yet methinks, if thou weigh things well, thou mayſt be rais'd to ſuch well grounded hopes of thy own particular happineſs, as may very much conquer theſe doubtings and fears, which thou complaineſt of under the name of unbelief. For let me ask thee ſeriouſly, why is it thou canſt not believe thou ſhalt be ſaved by Chriſt? It is not, I know, becauſe thou doubteſt of the ſufficiency of his ſatisfaction, or of the truth of his promiſes, or the graciouſneſs of his nature. For art thou not fully perſwaded, that he will ſave all thoſe who truly believe in him? I make no doubt but thou art: wherefore hence it is plain, that thy fears of periſhing ariſe from an opinion, that thou art not a true Believer. But this from thy own acknowledgments, I have made evident that thou art, whilſt thou believeſt that Chriſt is the onely Saviour of Mankind, and art as willing he ſhould take away thy ſins from thee, as prevent wrath from falling upon thee. So that it is rather for want of a clear knowledge of thy ſelf, than for want of faith in the promiſes, that thou canſt ſo hardly believe thou ſhalt be ſaved. Wherefore once again I ask thee, art thou not willing, that Chriſt ſhould deliver thee, both from the dominion and condemnation of ſin? If thou art, and wilt ſhew it, by uſing the means he hath afforded for this end, then be aſſured, thou art a true believer, and as ſuch ſhalt be own'd and crown'd by the Lord that bought thee. And therefore with great alacrity come along with thy fellows, to the thankful remembrance of that eternal redemption obtain'd for you, by the blood which ratified the everlaſting Covenant betwixt God and his people.

2. Whatever your weakneſſes, corruptions, temp-

tations are, let them not detain you from; but rather send you with more speed to this Ordinance: For you know not but that may be the means, which God will bless for the removal of them. And take this for a certain truth, whilst you have no sin, but what is the burden of your Soul, and which you labour and long to be freed from, you have no sin that makes you unfit for the Sacrament: nay more, this your sense of sin makes you richly fitted for it. And then there is less ground of doubt, as to the fears and sadness you may labour under, or any temptations with which you are troubled: You cannot sure be so weak, as to think your selves upon any of these accounts unmeet for your Lord's Table: For you must remember, he never made this the qualification of his Guests, that they should come wanting nothing, but he calls hither the necessitous to supply their wants. You come not hither onely to be thankful for what you have received, but to receive farther what your Souls stand in need of. You would think he argued at a very silly rate that should tell you, you must not go to a feast 'till your hunger was satisfied, nor come to the fire 'till you are warm: and yet no better is the Sophistry of Satan, whereby he would perswade you, that whilst you feel so many imperfections cleave to you, and lie under such great doubtings, you must stay away from the Sacrament; when as this is one means appointed by God for your relief: here's both Physick and Food administred to the sick and fainting. And God may take this season of revealing himself to you, and satisfying those doubts which you could no other way get rid of. Thus hath it been with many a Soul, why may it not be so with you also?

3. Pray tell me, notwithstanding all these faults which you find with your selves, yet do you not hold on in the performance of other duties? To instance in one,

one, do you not uſe to pray conſtantly? If you do, why then will you not be brought to this work alſo? For aſſure your ſelves, if you be ſuch whoſe Prayers are acceptable to God, your receiving will be acceptable alſo. Without a dependance upon Chriſt the Mediator, and a reſolution to conform your ſelves to the will of God, your very Prayers will be loathſome; but if theſe things be in you, all your ſervices will be well-pleaſing to him. Wherefore beware of pretending ſo much reverence for this Ordinance, and ſo much neceſſity for preparation, that leſt you ſhould not demean your ſelves as you ought, you will wholly neglect it: for ſure you cannot think this according to your Maſters will, that you ſhould run away from your work, for fear of miſcarrying in it. Nor pretend that this is of a nature ſo much different from all other duties, that whilſt you may do *them*, you may not be admitted to *this*, ſince, if you be ſincere and hearty in one as well as another, endeavouring to improve them to the end for which they were appointed, even to get nearer to God thereby, be ſure you ſhall be accepted in all. Moreover bethink your ſelves what you would have done, had you liv'd in the firſt ages of the Church, when the Chriſtians were wont for the moſt part, at every time of their aſſembling, to have a Sacrament. Would you then have ordinarily with-drawn from them? Or would you not rather have contented your ſelves with that meaſure of preparation, that you had then been capable of making. Though think not that I am this while encouraging you to lazineſs, or to ruſh heedleſly and inconſiderately hereupon: no, be as diligent as ever you are able, to prepare your ſelves for ſo near an approach to the great God, but yet be not ſo over-ſcrupulous as to keep back from the Ordinance, or make your coming leſs profitable, through exceſſive fears.

And remember ſtill, that the habitual devotedneſs of the Soul to God, expreſs'd in conſtant holineſs of life, is the beſt qualification for this and every other performance.

4. Laſtly, one would think you of all perſons ſhould not be guilty of refuſing your preſence here, where there is a commemoration made of the love of your deareſt Lord. I ſpeak to you that are ſerious Chriſtians; well may others ſlight this duty, if you that lie under ſo great engagements to it, will be kept back by any Ordinary pretences. You are ſuch that are ſomewhat acquainted with the greatneſs of that mercy, manifeſted in the Redemption of the World, and will *you* be eaſily detained from *ſhewing forth that death*, which procured it? You are perſons tender of your Maſter's honour, and ſenſible of your own duty; ſhew then that you are ſo, by obeying his command, and preſerving the eſteem due to his ſacred Ordinances, by your conſtant reverent attending upon them.

Others there are, that may complain of their unfitneſs, who find themſelves at a loſs in their preparations for this duty, which yet they are very willing to ſet about, and are deſirous of Inſtructions for their right performance of it. For theſe eſpecially I have reſerved ſome Directions, to which I ſhall come preſently.

But there are a third ſort, thoſe the worſt, and, I fear, the moſt, who will confeſs they are unfit for the Sacrament, and therefore will by no means be drawn to it, but will tell you, though they are not fit now, yet hereafter they hope they ſhall be; whilſt in the mean time there are no ſigns of any preparation they make: for come to them one Moneth or Year after another, ſtill they are in the ſame poſture, and uſe the ſame excuſes. Now the very plain caſe of theſe perſons, I take to be this;

this; So much knowledge they have, that they are convinc'd no man ought to come to the Sacrament, who is not firmly resolved to forsake his sins, and to become a new man, if before he have been a careless liver; and yet their Consciences tell them, that such and such sins they are guilty of, which they cannot endure to think of parting with, and such and such duties they believe they ought to set upon, which yet they have no mind to; and therefore so much modesty they have, that they will not come to bind themselves, to that which they are not resolved to do; and this while they fancy to themselves, that their case is something better, than if they should go and make promises of amendment, and soon after break them; and are apt to conceit, that they may as yet safely take somewhat more liberty, than will be lawful for them, when once they have taken the Sacrament, whereby they imagine they should be strangely hampered, and tied to a strictness which they have no liking to: But yet hereafter, when they have tasted a little more of the pleasures of the world, they intend to betake themselves to such a course, and then they'l be constant at Sacraments, and as devout as may be, this they promise to themselves. I dare appeal to the Consciences of many, whether such as these have not been their thoughts. Reader, have they not been thy own? And commonly it is either tippling or wantonness, or love to an idle and jolly life, and a listlesness to all pains and diligence in spiritual affairs, and a misapprehension of serious holiness, as if it was a most troublesome riged thing, that are the ordinary causes of these, and most mens continuance at a distance from godliness, and make them so backward to devote themselves entirely to God. Now these I confess are not to be called immediately to the Sacrament, but seriously to be dealt with in order to their recovery, from those sen-

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ſual inclinations, and wretched deluſions; which render them ſo unfit for, and averſe from it; to which purpoſe ſerve the former exhortations to Repentance and Faith, whereon I ſtaid ſo long. Onely I ſhall here diſcover to them two dangerous miſtakes, wherewith they ſeem willing to impoſe upon themſelves, and which chiefly hinder the performance of their duty.

The firſt is, a conceit that they may take ſome kind of liberty, for a looſe converſation, before they have bound themſelves to the contrary by the Sacrament, which thereupon they are much more backward to.

Now firſt I ſhall grant, that hereby a farther obligation is laid upon them, to the greateſt watchfulneſs againſt ſin, and to a faithful diſcharge of their duty to God, in the whole of their lives: and the wilful violation of ſolemn engagements renders ſin much more hainous: Wherefore it hath been my care all along to make you underſtand, that it is not ſo much the bare Receiving that I would perſwade you to, as to get your ſouls in a fitneſs for the work, and to do it in a right manner. And once again let me warn you, as you love your Souls, not to come hither in love with your ſins, or without reſolutions to turn from every evil way. Be it known unto you, *God will be ſanctified in thoſe that draw near him*, and will ſeverely puniſh irreverence & profane rudeneſs, in thoſe that pretend to his ſolemn worſhip and ſervice, as you may ſee in that terrible inſtance of *Nadab* and *Abihu*, Lev. 10. 1, 2, 3. And for unworthy receiving of the Lord's Supper, the Apoſtle tells the *Corinthians, For this very cauſe many were weak and ſickly amongſt them, and many faln aſleep*; and becauſe they would not judge themſelves, therefore God judged them, 1 *Cor.* 11. 30, 31. He's an Holy God, and commands all thoſe to be holy, that hope for acceptance in their approaches to him. And he's a God that ſearches

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the heart, ſo that there's no hope of deceiving him. Wherefore ſtand off, all you that have deſign'd to perſiſt one Moneth or Week longer in your rebellions againſt the Sovetaign Majeſty. Dare not to offer ſo great an affront to him, as to thruſt in among his Subjects, whilſt thou art a reſolved Traytor, as if thou would'ſt make a tryal, whether he could diſcern thee in that croud. He's a jealous God, and will not endure to be ſo tempted; and ſooner or later be ſure thy Sin ſhall find thee out. If then thou diſlikeſt the holy Laws and Government of Chriſt, take not an Oath in a mockery, that thou wilt be ſubject to him, which beforehand thou intendeſt not to keep. Here's no jeſting or dallying; beware how thou playeſt with edg-tools. Theſe are ſerious things, wherefore either be ſerious and ſincere in thy medling with them, or keep at a diſtance. Avoid, I ſay, all you loathſome defiled ſinners, that are in love with your filth, and will not be waſhed and cleanſed; whilſt this is your poſture, you are no way fit to ſit at the Table of the King of Glory, there to feaſt with his beloved Friends, whom he hath purified and made meet for his fellowſhip and favour.

But perhaps you'l preſently reply, you like all this well enough, this is that you would have, and you agree with me to ſtay away, as perceiving your own unfitneſs. And are you indeed reſolved to ſtay away, and to continue in this unprepared poſture, as thinking you have hereby ſome more diſpenſation for a careleſs ungodly life than others have? Alas! poor wretches, how willing you are to be cheated into miſery? And how deſirous do you ſeem of a freedom to do your ſelves the greateſt miſchief? But a little to undeceive you, let me aſſure all you that live upon this Earth, and are endued with reaſon, whether you will bind your ſelves to God by this Sacrament or not; there lie ſo many other diſpenſable

sable engagements on you to his service, that you have not the least liberty more than others to rebell against him: and that will sufficiently appear, if you do but consider these two things.

1. *The relation wherein you naturally and necessarily stand to God.*

2. *Your more expres's and profest obligations to him.*

For the first, Consider, Are you not his creatures and he your maker? And is he not the upholder of your being, the lengthner of your lives, and the giver of all your mercies? Is he not therefore your owner and Governour? Do you not owe your selves, and all you have to him? And is it not your duty to serve and obey him, whether you have promised you will do so or not? Do you think he hath no title to you, till in some solemn manner you have profest subjection to him? Do you think the service you owe to God, is so purely a free-will offering, that if you *will* render it you may, and if not, you are in no fault? By this reason God must be much beholden to you for it. What, do not his Laws bind, till you have given your consent? Must he ask you leave to govern you? Do you think it is with you in this case, as with a Servant that owes this man or that no duty, till he hath hired himself into his Service? Sure you cannot be so stupid. But rather will you not yield, that from your very birth you are at least as much obliged to obedience to your Maker, as any Child to his Parent? And pray tell me, what would you think of that Child, who, when his Father bad him do any thing, should stubbornly refuse, and tell him he never promised him any such obedience? Would you think this a satisfactory answer? Do you not easily perceive, that Children are bound to obey their Parents, even by virtue of that relation they stand in to them, though they never enter into any formal engagement

to

to be dutiful? Even thus do you ſtand abſolutely bound to obey God, the *Father of Spirits*, before ever you profeſs your ſelves to be his people: And all your profeſſions, though they are as ſo many farther ties upon you to obedience, yet they give not God any new right to you which before he had not, only hereby you acknowledge his right, and promiſe to render him what is his due. Hence then you may ſee what an abſurd conceit it is, that you may any whit more freely ſin againſt God before you have taken the Sacrament, than after. Can you be ſo ſottiſh, as to imagine, that ſuch excuſes as theſe will ſerve your turn at that day, when you muſt be called to render a reaſon of your doing? When the Goſpel firſt came to the Heathens, I hope, you'l grant they were bound to receive it, and yet they had never before given their conſent to be rul'd by Chriſt, nor had made any Covenant with him. But why ſtand I ſo long on a caſe ſo plain?

And then take notice farther; that by virtue of this ſubjection which you owe to God as his creatures, you are bound to expreſs your reſolutions to ſerve him, by what ſigns, and in what manner he ſhall appoint you; now he hath commanded you, to expreſs theſe reſolutions by receiving the Lords Supper, as I have before proved: And will you diſobey this particular command, and then think, this will excuſe you from obedience to the reſt. To make the caſe plain by a like inſtance: Suppoſe when the King had commanded all his Subjects to repair to ſeveral places in the Kingdom, there to take the Oath of Allegiance, many amongſt them ſhould abſent themſelves, and refuſe to take it, and afterwards ſhould conſpire together, and riſe up in arms againſt him; do you think it would excuſe them, to plead that they never ſwore Allegiance to him? Why firſt it was their fault that they did not, ſince they were

commanded

commanded to do it; and then however they were engaged to peace and faithfulness by living in the Kingdom, and receiving protection from their Prince. Even thus will your neglect of Sacraments be charged on you as a fault, for which you had no reason, but will be far from being admitted as an excuse of any other sins, against which you were sufficiently tied, by your living meerly upon God, and receiving all you had from him.

But then in the second place consider, *you are already obliged by your own promises and professions, to walk in the fear of the Lord*, and therefore have not the least ground to allow your selves in sin, from your not having received the Lord's Supper as an engagement against it. For bethink you a little, do you not profess your selves to be Christians? And what's the meaning of that, but that you worship God by Jesus Christ, and acknowledge him to be your Maker and Ruler, and Christ to be your Saviour? And accordingly, are you not devoted to God by Baptism, whereby you stand bound to renounce the Devil, the World, and the Flesh, and to be Christ's faithful Servants to your lives end? I confess, you were thus consecrated to God by your Parents in your infancy, when, according to the Law of God and Nature, they had full power thus to dispose of you: but now you are come to years of discretion, do you consent to what they have done or not? In plain English, do you renounce your Baptism, whereby you stand obliged to be the Servants of God and his Son Christ Jesus? You that I am now speaking to, will, I know, deny this with great earnestness, and cry God forbid that you should be such Apostate wretches, from Christians to turn Heathens and Infidels. Well then, if you acknowledge your selves under the bond of your Baptism, assure your selves, you are hereby as much

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tied from the least sin in thought, word, or deed, as you can be by the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. What will you do then in this case? will you dare to run on in those sins from which your Baptisme doth bind you, and so renounce it in your practice, whilst you own it in profession? Or will you hereafter be so silly as to abstain from the communion, for fear of engaging your selves in an holy life, to which you stand engag'd already by your own consent? If you continue in this mind, it's too plain a sign that in your hearts you disown your Baptism it self: and what a case are you in then? For let me ask you, if you had been born of Heathen Parents, and were but just now come to the understanding of the Christian Religion, and were acquainted what kind of Persons they must be that own'd it, would you be baptiz'd into this Faith, and hereby profess your resolutions to lead such an holy life, as all Christians are commanded? If you say you would not, hence then it follows, that you dislike your Baptism, since if it was to be done again you would none of it. And if indeed you wish your selves, in the case of unbaptized Heathens now, you are really worse than they, and shall be in a worse condition shortly. But if you say, you would readily be baptized if it was yet to do, then fain would I know, why you are so backward to receive the Lord's Supper, wherein you do but renew the Covenant that is made at Baptism, acknowledging your selves to be true Christians, and promising that you will remain so: what possible reason can you devise for this unwillingness?

Withall take notice, all you that are baptized into the name and Church of Christ, and do stand to your Baptism, you have hereby bound your selves to be his faithful servants, to obey his commands, and to behave your selves in his Church, as he directs you: Now he

hath

hath commanded all Christians, that are of capacity, to prepare themselves, and so to receive the Sacrament of his Supper: Do you not clearly perceive then, how your Baptism binds you to this Duty, you being now come to the use of your reason? How is it then that you dare neglect it, whilst you are so straighily engag'd to it?

And further, beside your own Baptism, you Fathers that have Children, every time you bring them to be baptized, do profess before God and the Congregation, that you renounce the Devil, the World, and the sinful lusts of the flesh, that you believe the Articles of the Christian faith, and will keep Gods holy will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the days of your life. And are you sincere in all this? If you are, why should you stay away from the Sacrament, where you are required to profess and promise no more? However, I hope, hence you may be convinc'd, that before you pertake of the Lords Supper, you are so far bound to an holy life, that you have no allowance for the least sin, any more than you have afterward, which is that I am proving.

And this is farther evident by all other duties of religion, which you perform to God, every one of which ties you to the most exact obedience to him. I suppose you are not so Atheistical, but that sometimes you pray to God; and when you pray, do you not beg of him pardon of sin and grace to do him faithful service? When you say the Lords Prayer, do you not therein beseech God to forgive you your trespasses, and not to lead you into temptation, but deliver you from evil? And what, dare you ask of him forgiveness of Sin, whilst you are resolved to continue in it still? I presume you hope to obtain what you ask, and can you so much as flatter your selves with any hope that God will pardon your

ſins whilſt you will not forſake them? Hath not his word plainly told you the contrary? And when you pray to be kept from ſin and the power of Satan, is it not to be ſuppos'd that you deſire theſe things? and doth not the expreſſion of your deſires engage you to do what you can to obtain what you pray for? and are you not therefore bound to take heed of ſin, to watch againſt and reſiſt temptations? except you take God for an Idol, and make your prayers in a mockery, as if your ſervant ſhould come and entreat you to help him do his work, and then run away, and never ſet his hand to't; or as if your Child ſhould pray you to keep him from falling into the water, and ſhould throw himſelf into it as ſoon as he had done. Dare you venture thus to play and dally with the Almighty? And when you deſire him to ſave your ſouls, and keep you from Hell, it ſpeaks you reſolv'd not wilfully to deſtroy and damn your ſelves, or elſe you are horrid mockers of God. Methinks you ſhould never have the impudence to come near him, or ſpeak a word to him, whilſt you are fully bent to go on in thoſe waies that are ſo contrary and provoking to him. The like I might ſay of hearing the word, you are thereby engaged to give obedience to it: for you cannot think ſure you ſerve God ſufficiently by hearing your duty, whilſt you ſet on about it. And for you to come to hear what God ſhall ſay by his Miniſter, with a ſecret purpoſe to hold on in ſuch and ſuch courſes, whatever ſhall be told you to the contrary, is little leſs dangerous and damnable, than to come to the Sacrament with ſuch wicked purpoſes. Let this then ſuffice to remove your firſt miſtake, that you may take liberty in ſome ſinful wayes you have a mind to, before you have taken the Sacrament.

The ſecond groſs miſtake which I find in your objection, is, that you think, though at preſent you have no

great mind to be ſo ſerious, as to ſet upon preparation for the Sacrament, yet that hereafter you ſhall, when you have had your ſwinge a while longer, and have taken a little more pleaſure, being as yet perhaps but in the prime of your youth, and thereupon you hope that God will bear with you yet a while, ſince you have ſuch good purpoſes to become his ſervants for the time to come.

Should I go about fully to ſhew you the vanity of this conceit, and your folly in delaying to return to God, I might fill many ſheets: wherefore that I may not be tedious, I ſhall do little more than repreſent to you the very true language and import of this pretence of yours, that ſo you may be aſhamed for ever uſing it more, or harbouring it any longer. When you talk of ſtaying yet a while, before you caſt off your old companions and courſes, and bind your ſelves to a godly life at the Sacrament, what do you in effect but ſay? That when you have contemn'd Gods mercy, and griev'd his Spirit a little longer, and done ſomewhat more to diſhonour his name, then you will betake your ſelves to him, and become his people; when you have done Satan yet a little more Service, then you'l ſhake him off, and take Chriſt for your Maſter; when you have a while longer trod under foot his precious Blood, then it ſhall waſh you from all your ſins; when you have run deeper on the ſcore, and added ſomething more both to the number and hainouſneſs of your tranſgreſſions, then you'l come for a pardon; when you have done ſomewhat more to make God your enemy, then you'l ſeek reconciliation; when you have let your luſts take deeper rooting, then you'l pluck them up; when you have made them a little ſtronger, then you'l ſubdue them; when the ſore is feſtered, then you'l apply the plaiſter; when the gangreen is almoſt got to your

your vitals, then you'l ſeek a remedy: Thus fooliſhly, thus preſumptuouſly and baſely do they argue, who think it is too ſoon yet to come home to God. and be religious in good earneſt. I know you would be aſham'd to ſpeak thus, and would ſcarce be perſwaded there lodges ſo much wickedneſs in your hearts, but for certain there does, whil'ſt you retain ſecret purpoſes to go on in a way of known ſin. Ah poor ſinner! that thou didſt but a little know what thou doeſt, whilſt thou ſtandſt thus unreſolv'd whether thou ſhouldeſt yet bid farewel to thy luſts, and come over heartily to God by Jeſus Chriſt. Oh diſingenious creature! doſt thou think thou haſt not provokt and diſhonour'd thy Maker enough *yet?* Haſt thou not *yet* ſufficiently abuſed thy Redeemers grace and patience? Haſt thou not *yet* thrown away time enough? and ſinn'd away mercies and offers enough? Is ſin ſo ſweet and profitable a thing that it ſhould be ſo hard to determine whether it was beſt to be forſaken or not? Is God ſo hard a Maſter, and his ſervice ſuch a burdenſome thing, that ſinners muſt be wooed to him with ſo much earneſtneſs, and all prove too little with the moſt? Is it ſo ſafe and deſireable a ſtate to remain ſtill in the gall of bitterneſs and under the wrath of God? Can you keep off this wrath which you are plucking upon you? Have you both repentance and time at your own beck? And are you ſure of repentance, how long ſo ever you ſtay before you ſeek it? will holineſs be good for you hereafter, and is it not now? Or are you afraid of being happy too ſoon? wherefore weigh things well, Sirs, and then reſolve whether there be any wiſdom, in delaying that work which may be put off too long, but cannot be too quickly done: that work to which in all reaſon and conſcience you ſtand engag'd every hour, even to be divorc'd from ſin and Satan, and firmly betrothed

troth'd to the Lord Jesus. How long must he seek and sue for thy consent? Why should he not have thy youth as well as any other? Doth Satan deserve it better than he? Did not he die for thee in the prime of his years, and why should'st not thou live to him whilst thou art young? When wilt thou have put away that wretched disobedient answer, that it's yet *too soon* to entertain him? Hath he stood knocking for entrance till his locks are wet with the dew of the night, and is it still *too soon* to open to him and let him in? Oh beware, least thy continued stubbornness should even wear out his patience; least thy perverse carriage should provoke him for ever to leave thee; and least if still thou think'st it not *time* yet to break off thy sins, and set upon a godly life, he should think it *time* to cut thee off, and sentence thee to everlasting death. In the mean time know, that all thy good designs, what thou wilt do, and be hereafter, will not be the least excuse of thy present wickedness, nor make thy case any better with God; nay rather, they make it worse, since it appears thou art convinced in thy Conscience, that thou oughtest to live after another fashion than thou do'st, and yet wilfully neglectest thy acknowledged duty. I hope than I have said enough, to shew that thou hast no refuge, no excuse that will hold, whilst thou absentest thy self from the Sacrament, out of a lothness as yet to perform thy life, and do the duties to which this would bind thee. Wherefore to conclude, If it be thy purpose to continue in any sinful course, come to the Lords Table if thou darest: for far be it from me to speak one word to encourage thee to forswear thy self. But yet on the other hand, Go on in thy sins and stay away, if thou darest: for thou art in danger every moment of dropping into Hell, whilst thou remainest in such a state. Thou seest then to what a strait sin brings thee,

thee, ſo that turn thee which way thou wilt, whilſt thou willingly carrieſt it about thee, an Angel with a flaming ſword ſtands full in thy way, threatning deſtruction; whether thou comeſt or comeſt not, whilſt thon continueſt a reſolved ſinner, thy caſe is ſad and deplorable. But yet one way remains, and but one that I know for thy ſafety, even with all ſpeed to caſt away thy ſins, and change thy heart and life: and then come as ſoon as thou wilt to the Lords Table, there to profeſs this bleſſed change, and to confirm thy ſelf therein. And for thy encouragement take notice of two things.

1. *It is not an abſolute ſinleſs perfection that here thou bindeſt thy ſelf to*; even this thou ſhould'ſt thirſt and aſpire after, but yet thou art not to be diſcouraged, if thou never attain it, till thou art taken into the number of *the Spirits of juſt men made perfect.* Miſtake me not as if I was indulging thee an allowance in any the leaſt ſin, no, this is it I warn thee of, and againſt this thou muſt covenant in the Sacrament, to wit, againſt a willing, loving entertainment of any ſin whatever. And thou ſhalt be accounted true to this Covenant, if thou hate and ſtrive againſt all, and are humbled under the ſenſe of thy remaining imperfections, being far more deſirous to be rid of them, than to retain them. And if upon knowledge of any ſlip or ſtumble thou riſeſt again by true repentance, and recourſe to the blood of Chriſt for mercy, and to his Spirit for freſh ſtrength, being reſolved to take more heed to thy ways for the time to come. It is here as if thou ſhould'ſt promiſe thy Phyſician, thou would'ſt be careful of thy health; this doth not imply, that thou wilt never be ſick more, but yet it implies thus much, that thou wilt not wilfully bring diſeaſes upon thy ſelf, but wilt uſe the means that are appointed to preſerve thy health; and whatever

ſickneſs cleaves to thee will be thy trouble, and thou wilt deſire and endeavour to be freed from it. Even thus art thou bound to regard the health of thy ſoul, and to look upon ſin as a ſpiritual ſickneſs, and therefore never to fall in love with it, but to do thy beſt towards its utter removal: Even thoſe infirmities, to which the beſt are liable, are not to be cheriſht and pleaded for, no more than thou wou'ſt plead for the keeping of a little head-ach, or any bodily pain. Thou ſhould'ſt not by thy good will be guilty ſo much as of a vain thought, an idle word, or the leaſt motion to any ſin; but yet it is not required of thee, to promiſe abſolutely never more to be guilty of any of theſe; nor art thou to judge thy ſelf unfit for the Sacrament, becauſe thou find'ſt ſuch imperfections cleave to thee, ſo long as from thy heart thou abhorreſt them, and do'ſt ordinarily overcome all temptations to more groſs and wilfull ſins. Whilſt thou art in the fleſh, thy ſtate is like to be ſo far imperfect, that it will be thy daily duty *to grow in grace*, and to pray for the *forgiveneſs of thy treſpaſſes*; to improve Chriſt, both as a treaſury of grace, whence thou art to be ſupplied, and as an advocate with the father, through whom thou may'ſt be pardoned. This I mention, that thou may'ſt not ſay, I diſcourage thee from the Sacrament, by making it an engagement to greater ſtrictneſs, than it's poſſible for man in this life to come up to, ſince I do aſſure thee thou mayſt ſafely come hither, if thou art but ſincerely reſolved to do what in thee lies to pleaſe God, and not to run wilfully into thoſe actions, which thou know'ſt are contrary to his will. And this alſo may take away that fond opinion of ſome ignorant people, *that it's beſt never to receive the Sacrament, till they come to their death-bed*, as thinking that every ſin afterward will damn them; but remember what I have told you, that we do

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not promiſe never to ſin more, but not to allow our ſelves in ſin; and to this ſincere endeavour to keep all Gods commands, we are before as ſtrictly tied by our Baptiſm, and therefore by your reaſon this ſhould be deferred till we come to die, as ſome of the Ancients did, partly through this miſtake, and thinking this waſht away all the ſins before committed. And if you ſhould be of this opinion alſo, that the Sacrament gives you a pardon of all your former ſins, and therefore it's good to put it off to your death-bed, conſider well, that it's by virtue of Gods promiſes that you have any ground to expect pardon of ſin; and by thoſe promiſes, to which the Sacraments are Seals, this pardon is aſſured to all penitent believing ones; ſo that Baptiſm and the Lords Supper do ſeal your pardon, even of ſins that may hereafter be committed, if you truly repent of them, and betake your ſelves to Gods mercy in Chriſt for forgiveneſs: But if you think, when you have liv'd an ungodly life, to make up all by taking the Sacrament when you are ſick, know, to your timely conviction, this will not do the work, as you ſhall know to your terrour, if you depend upon't: for remember what I told you, that if you do not truly repent of ſin, it is not the Sacrament that will give you a pardon; and this true repentance few upon a death-bed have, that put it off till then. Moreover, you that are for deferring this duty till you come to dye, I might ask you how you know whether you ſhall not dye ſuddenly, or have the uſe of your reaſon taken away by your diſtemper, or be viſited with the plague, that no miniſter dare come near you? and farther, you ſeem not to conſider, that this Ordinance is exceeding helpful to us, for the overcoming of luſts, and leading our lives as we ought, and this brings me to the ſecond thing which I would have you take notice of.

2. Namely, That if thou art but once come up to a reſolution, to do thy beſt againſt ſin, and to pleaſe God, and addreſſeſt thy ſelf to the Lords Supper, with an earneſt deſire of grace to be here given thee from Chriſt, to enable thee to perform thy promiſes, thou maiſt very confidently expect ſtrength and aſſiſtance from him, and even now to partake thereof. Little do'ſt thou think what a mighty blow thou mightſt give to thy ſtrong luſts, and to the kingdom of Satan within thee, by ſuch a firm reſolution as this, made with an humble dependance upon Gods grace bound upon, and confirmed by taking the Sacrament. Oh! if thou waſt but brought into ſuch ingenuous and good a frame, as to be truly grieved, that Sin and Satan ſhould have ſo much intreſt in thee, and didſt heartily deſire, that God would caſt them forth, and take poſſeſſion of thee for himſelf, in how good a way waſt thou then to a deliverance? If God ſaw thee labouring under the burden of thy luſts, tugging with thy backward heart, to bring it to him, thou canſt not imagine what help he would ſoon afford thee. Wherefore ſit not down in a faint dejection; ſay not, *there is no hope of ever getting up ſuch ſtrong luſts, which are ſo deep rooted in my nature, and ſo confirmed by long cuſtome, it's to no purpoſe to attempt it.* Why man, muſt not this work be done, or thou periſh forever? And the longer it's delaid, the harder it's like to be. Thy caſe is ſad indeed but not deſperate yet; Let neither thy preſumption, nor deſpondency make it deſperate. *The things that are impoſſible with men, are poſſible with God.* Wherefore rouze thy ſelf, and gather up all thy ſtrength: for be ſure, ſitting ſtill will bring thy death. Limit not Gods power, but ask thy own heart, whether thou art willing to be cured: for no diſeaſes are too hard for the Phyſician that will take thee in hand. If thou wilt but attended upon him, and humbly beg, and accept

cept his help, oh how ſoon can he bring down all high imaginations, and every thought that rebells againſt him, and ſubdue all things to himſelf. He hath healed and cleanſed as vile ſinners as thou, and conquered as ſtubborn hearts as thine. He can ſo change thy nature, and the very temper and bent of thy ſoul, that thou ſhalt abhor thoſe ſins which now thou think'ſt thou canſt not live without, ſo that thou wilt chuſe rather to be torn limb from limb, or to take Toads and Serpents into thy boſome, than to meddle with what was once ſo pleaſant; and wilt wonder that ever thou ſhould'ſt be ſuch a Beaſt, ſuch a Devil, as to take delight in that which was ſo hurtfull to thy ſelf, and ſo diſpleaſing to God. Oh let not then the ſeeming ſweetneſs of any luſt bewitch thee any longer, or betray thee into a ſlothful neglect of thy duty: If ſin would have made thee happy, thou hadſt found it long ſince, and yet what haſt thou ever got from it, that comforts thee to look back upon it? Or that would do thee any good, if thou waſt to die at this hour? And put it on thy account, nothing better wilt thou get at the laſt. But little do'ſt thou think what thou loſeſt one year after another whilſt thou remaineſt eſtranged from God, and think'ſt an holy life ſuch a tedious difficult thing. Be perſwaded then at length to make a trial, and ſee what can be done in the caſe. Bind thy ſelf by the moſt ſolemn vow to forſake thy wicked waies, and to become Gods faithful ſervant, and come to the Sacrament with this deſign; and if thou be ſincere, thou maiſt be confident of receiving help from God, to keep his Covenant, which, by his Word and Spirit, thou art drawn to make with him. So much for the third objection.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

Obj. *We are not in perfect charity, but at variance with our neighbours, Answered.*

4. *Obj.* THE fourth and last that I shall take notice of, is very common in the mouths of many, to wit, *That they are at variance with their neighbours, and therefore cannot with good conscience come to the Communion, whither none are to come, but they that are in perfect charity with all men;* and commonly they alledge, that they have Law-suits, or some kind of quarrellings one with another.

Ans. In answer hereto, let me ask you, who put this objection, whose fault is it, that you are not at peace with your neighbours? I question not but you'l presently tell me, that the fault is theirs. But then farther, have you no enmity in your minds against them? But are you willing to be reconciled to them, and to do what on your part may conduce thereto? And though they be cross and perverse, yet do you from your heart forgive them? so that you would not take revenge on them, if it were in your power, but would do them good, if they should need your help? It's very like you'l be ready to reply, that you are thus well-affected toward them, and that the malice is only on their part: and for the present I shall suppose you speak true; whereupon I demand, whether you can be so weak, as to think that another mans sin, shall be laid to your charge? If your neighbour be malicious, is that any fault of yours? Or doth his malice make you any more unfit for the Sacrament, than his drunkenness or coveteousness? What a sad case might the best Christian be in, if it was in the power of every wicked man, that owes him

him a ſpite, to make it unlawfull for him to go to the Sacrament? as by your arguing it would be. Suppoſe any malicious man ſhould without reaſon pick a quarrel with me, and after I had uſed all means to pacifie him, he ſhould utterly refuſe to be at peace, what's to be done in this caſe? Muſt I ſtay away from the Sacrament till I can perſwade him to be friends with me? perhaps that may never be, and muſt I be bound to a thing impoſſible? or be ſo great a loſer through another Mans wickedneſs, which I cannot help? Is it not enough for me to be reconcil'd to him in my own mind, and freely to forgive him what injuries he hath done me? how elſe would thoſe bleſſed Saints in the Primitive times have done, whilſt they were maligned and perſecuted by almoſt all Men? we never find that they made this any pretence to keep away from the Lords Table, at which they did ſo frequently attend. They thought themſelves guiltleſs (as well they might) whilſt they prayed for their Perſecutors, bleſt them that curſt them, not avenging themſelves, but giving place unto wrath, and not giving to any man juſt cauſe of offence. And do you but labour thus to behave your ſelves, and then never trouble your minds with other mens enmity againſt you. Yea, do but thus, and you will fully anſwer the command God hath given us, to live in peace and quietneſs, *Rom.* 12. 18. *If it be poſſible, as much as in you lies, live peaceable with all men* Which words plainly inſinuate, that it is not alwaies poſſible to have the good will of all Men, but yet we muſt labour for this, and do nothing that may hinder it, and therefore above all muſt not bear, or diſcover ill will to them.

But here perhaps ſome will reply, that they are forc't to vindicate their wrongs, and to go to Law with thoſe that would abuſe them, or that ſue them without cauſe, and therefore can they with a ſafe conſcience receive the

the Sacrament before the contention is ended? why, to this you must even ask your own hearts for an answer. For (as I said before) if you this while have no malicious design against them, but seek only to defend or right your selves in a just and lawful manner, there's nothing that need trouble you in this case. For in the thing it self, its not a sin to go to Law, if the cause and design be good, no more than it was for the *Jews* to appeal to their Judges, to determine matters betwixt man and man. And therefore when the Apostle condemns the Christians, for going to Law one with another, before the Heathen Judges, which made it *utterly a fault*, he yet adviseth them to set some in the Church to judge betwixt the brethren, in controversies that might happen touching their worldly concernment, 1 *Cor.* 6.4,5. And these suits may possibly be lawful on both sides, as when such a difficult case shall happen that cannot otherwise be decided, and then both parties might maintain charity to each other, if they were but such as they ought. But if without cause you are vext by men of contention, beware of acting out of wrath, spleen or revenge; yea, or of doing any thing out of meer selfishness: for even in your temporal concerns, about your estate, credit, *&c.* Gods interest should be more aimed at than your own; and you should not so much endeavour to secure or recover these for your own sake, as that you may hereby be more capable of honouring God: and if you saw that, through some circumstances, it might tend more to Gods honour, to neglect a vindication of your right that to prosecute it, in such a case it would be your duty to sit still. (They that have devoted themselves, and all they have to God, will understand this and none else.) Hence you find the Apostle expostulating with the Christians, why they would not take wrong, and even suffer themseves to be defrauded rather

rather than contend, whereby they did then ſo much diſgrace Religion. *Verſ.* 7. Of that forequoted Chapter. But yet I ſay, when it is your duty to maintain your right, againſt thoſe that would abuſe you, you may do this, and yet have no ſpight againſt their perſons, nor any deſire of their hurt, if your own hearts be right; and may really forgive them, whilſt you endeavour to avoid the injury which they would offer you. And let this ſuffice on ſuppoſition, that you are thus well-affected towards thoſe, that make themſelves your adverſaries; which if you indeed be, I hope I need uſe no more words to perſwade you, that other Mens malicious behaviour towards you, need be no hindrance to your coming to the Sacrament.

But on the other ſide, give me leave to deal plainly with you, all you that inſiſt upon this reaſon for neglecting your duty, *becauſe there's difference betwixt you and your Neghbours*, I ſtrongly ſuſpect that you your ſelves are very much in fault: and indeed you confeſs as much by your practice, whilſt in your words you diſown it; for why is it you make this a ground of abſtaining from the Sacrament, but that your conſciences tell you, you bear ſo much ill-will to your neighbours, that its a dangerous thing for you to receive it? Oh look back upon your wayes, and ſee whether inſtead of bearing wrongs, you have not wrong'd and defrauded others. Have you not oppreſt, or needleſly vext them, through eager deſigns of raiſing your ſelves by their ruins, not caring whom you have injured and trampled upon, ſo you might but get your own ends? Or if you will not own this, yet look faithfully into the temper of your ſouls. Do you not ſtand vilely affected towards ſome that have done you injuries, and whom you take for your enemies? Are you not backward to any thorough reconciliation with them? Do you not

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ſtand upon your terms? and expect that they ſhould come firſt and humble themſelves, and ſtoop to you, before you'l ſeek after any peace with them? your great ſpirits ſcorn to be firſt in this work; nay its well if you are not reſolv'd againſt it, let them do what they will? Oh proud wretches! Is this like Gods dealing with the World? when we had given him the offence, yet who was it began firſt to treat of a peace? hath the great God given you this example, and yet are you *too good*, forſooth, to ſeek to your fellow creatures to be at peace with you? If this be your *goodneſs*, may not the Devil himſelf paſs for *good?* for he hath pride enough, and what's yours better? But farther, do you not cheriſh a ſecret ſpleen againſt them, which fills you with implacable deſires of being reveng'd on them, and makes you griev'd to ſee them do well in the world? whereas you could heartily wiſh their ruine, and would delight to be in a capacity of doing them a miſchief; and long to bring them under you, that you might inſult over them, and make them repent that ever they diſpleaſed ſuch as you. Oh diveliſh and monſtrous ſpirit! that ever it ſhould dwell in the breaſts of any that call themſelves Chriſtians! *Chriſtians* are they call'd? they deſerve not the name of *Men.* Certainly there are many as good Chriſtians as theſe hang'd at *Tyburn* for cutting Mens throats. For did not fear of Man reſtrain them, you ſhould quickly ſee their envenom'd rancour break out into as bad effects. But ſuppoſe your malice be not boil'd up to ſuch an height, yet if you harbour ſo much as makes you unfit for the Sacrament (as according to your own acknowledgement you do, whilſt it keeps you from it) it's a plain ſign your ſouls are yet under miſerable diſtempers, far from being truly ſanctified; you live ſtill under the power of ſelf love, unmortified pride or covetouſneſs, which are

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the secret cause of this your discord with others. And alas! though these present differences were ended, you would be far from a fitness for the Sacrament, whilst you abide in the condition you are yet in, not having your peace made with God, but being in enmity against him, through a subjection to your reigning lusts. And therefore you might more truly say you are not fit for this duty, because you are proud, and covetous, and envious, than because you are at variance with any one; only you hope for some kind of excuse, by laying the fault on others, but that I have taken off before. And furthermore, is it not a plain discovery, how little love you have to Christ and your own souls, that you can willingly be so long absent from this Ordinance, upon such a silly pretence as this, that your neighbours and you are not agreed. It's a sign of an ill stomach, when people are glad of an excuse to save them from eating. What could not you, if you had been so minded, have got an agreement before now? Or at least, could not you have done so much towards it, as might have satisfied your Consciences, that you were not in fault? was there but any worldly advantage to be got by doing thus much, you would soon set about it, I'le warrant you. But being, I doubt, very indifferent to Sacraments, or to any thing that concerns your souls, a very little reason serves to keep you from them, since you find no want of them, nor can imagine how you should be much bettered by them. And whilst you are in this wretched frame, be sure you shall never want one thing or other to hinder you. To bring you to better apprehensions of things, let what I have said before suffice: for I now hasten to a conclusion; only let me wish you to beware of cheating your selves with that mistake, which I endeavour to remove under the last Objection, to wit, That whilst you come not to the Sa-

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crament, you may ſafely perſiſt in ſuch and ſuch actions, or in ſuch a temper of mind, which ought to be changed before you go thither: for thus you ſeem to think, whilſt you ſtay away, becauſe there are falling out betwixt you and others; being it ſeems reſolved to continue in your enmity, and think your ſelves ſecure enough, if you come not hither in this evil mind. If theſe be your thoughts, pray anſwer me theſe two things.

1. *How can you deſire of God the forgiveneſs of your ſins whilſt you refuſe to forgive others?* Have you the impudence to do it? Or the ignorance and preſumption, to think ſuch deſires would be granted? See where the contrary is expreſly told you, in that forementioned place, *Mat.* 6. 15. Nay, tell me plainly, How dare you ſo much as ſay the Lords Prayer, wherein you beg of God to forgive your treſpaſſes, as you forgive thoſe that treſpaſs againſt you? What, do you pray that he would remember your iniquties, and charge them upon you, and take vengeance of you? For thus it ſeems you deal with thoſe that offend you. Or do you think to make your caſe ſomewhat the better, by never ſaying this Prayer, or by leaving out this Petition? Can you imagine this will hinder God from dealing with you according to the tenour thereof? Me-thinks you ſhould not be ſo weak: No, be you ſure, God will make good his word, that if you forgive not, you ſhall not be forgiven, whether you give your conſent or not. If you ſay you do forgive your enemies, then I ask you again, why upon account of any differences you ſhould neglect the Sacrament? But if you do not forgive them, you ſee it's as dangerous to ſay your Prayers, whilſt you are in this mind, as to come to the Communion.

2. But again, If through theſe differences with your neighbours you are unfit for the Sacrament, pray bethink

think you well, *whether upon the same account you are not as unfit for death?* And dare you continue in such a desperate condition as this? Do you not believe, that the charity which is required to make you fit for the Communion of imperfect Saints here on earth, is as necessary for your admission into the Communion of Saints in Glory? Are you not fit to go to the Lords Table? and are you then fit to appear before his tribunal? Take this for an undoubted truth, that if you so far allow your self in malice or any other sin, that you are (according to the Gospel rule) unworthy of the Sacrament, if you die in this condition, you will be thought unworthy of everlasting life. Methinks then you should never dare to live in such an estate, wherein you dare not die. You take it to be a dangerous thing to die out of charity with any, and is it safe think you to live out of charity, or in any other sin, for those that are liable to death every moment? Wherefore, to conclude, my advice to you is, that you would without any longer delay go to your brother, and if you have wrong'd him, acknowledge it, and make all due reparation, and do what in you lies to be reconciled to him: but if he prove obstinate, or have wrong'd you, see that you heartily forgive him and clear your breast of all spight, or desire of revenge; so being carefull in all other respects duly to prepare your selves, come to the Lords Table, there to receive a confirmation of peace betwixt God and your own souls. And thus I have done with the several objections that are made against this duty.

CHAP. XVI.

Directions for a due Preparation, and right Receiving.

In the laſt place, according to my promiſe, I come to give ſome Direction to thoſe who are willing to addreſs themſelves to this work; to inſtruct them for their immediate preparation to, their behoviour in and after the ſame. And though I have already at large ſhewn what the deſign of this ordinance is, that ſo we might the better know how to behave our ſelves thereat, and have thence diſcovered what kind of perſons Communicants ought to be, yet I ſhall in a few words premiſe a repetition of the ſame, that you may the better apprehend and remember it.

Know then, that it pleaſed our bleſſed Lord Jeſus, in the evening of that night wherein he was betrayed, to appoint this Sacrament of his Supper, partly for the preſent comfort of his Apoſtles (who began to be caſt down upon the knowlege of his ſufferings, and removal from amongſt them) but principally for the benefit of them, and all other Chriſtians, in the times that were to follow, even till he ſhould come to Judgment, till which time it never ought to be laid down in the Church. The great end of it was (as I have ſaid) to preſerve freſh in the minds of all Chriſtians, the memory of their Lord and Maſter, and eſpecially af that unvaluable mercy ſhewn in his dying for them, his Death being very cleerly held forth by the breaking of the Bread, and pouring out of the Wine. But we muſt not think, that it was for an idle uneffectual Remembrance of him, that he commanded this duty, but for ſuch a Remembrance, as might tend to the great advantage of our ſouls; even that by remembring our Redemption,

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we might be brought to have low mean thoughts of our ſelves, who were loſt and undone, but recovered by Free grace; that we might keep up a ſenſe of the exceeding great evil of ſin, which made us liable to thoſe miſeries, whence only his Death can deliver us; and ſo might be ſtirred up to a greater ſorrow for, hatred of, and reſolutions againſt ſin, the occaſion of his Death; and that by the Remembrance of his love, we might be the ſtronglier engaged to him, and here, in a viſible and expreſs manner, might ſolemnize our Covenant with him, and frequently renew our promiſes of faithfulneſs. Moreover, here Chriſt hath made a familiar repreſentation of the bleſſings he hath obtained for Believers, that hereby we might be quickned to earneſt deſires after them, and ſo being at preſent fitted, for the communications of grace to our ſouls, might receive the ſame; and might here alſo receive a confirmation of our faith, that we ſhall in due time enjoy thoſe priviledges that are inviſible, and yet to come. And farther, he hath ordained, that his Death ſhould in this lively manner, at ſet times be repreſented to us, that having it freſh in our thoughts, we may be the more powerfully moved at ſuch ſeaſons as theſe, to celiberate and adore that wiſdome and goodneſs, which hath ſo wonderfully appeared in the contrivance and accompliſhment of our Redemption; and that fellow-Chriſtians meeting together for this work, may be the more endeared to one another, and quickned to long after a perfect communion in the praiſes and love of God and their Redeemer, in that future glory whereof they have here a ſhadow and foretaſt.

Now as the ends for which this Ordinance was appointed inform us, what kind of perſons they that frequent it ought to be, as to their habitual qualifications, ſo do they alſo teach us, what ought to be the workings

of our ſoul in our approaches to it; ſince here we are to exerciſe and put forth thoſe graces, which are before required to be wrought in us: but yet for your plainer direction, I ſhall tell you more particularly how you ought then to behave your ſelves; and laſtly ſhall ſhew, how you may improve it afterwards to your greateſt advantage.

But by the way take notice, that I ſuppoſe you, to whom I now ſpeak, to be ſuch as are heartily willing to come to the Sacrament in that manner, and to thoſe ends which Chriſt hath commanded: and therefore I ſuppoſe you to be already ſo far convinc't of the evil of ſin, that you are reſolved to forſake it; and ſo far convinc't of the greatneſs of thoſe benefits that come by a Saviour, and of your need of him, that you are firmly purpoſed to accept of him, as he offers himſelf to you, that you may be his, and he may be yours for ever. And upon this account, I ſhall ſay little to put you upon, or help you in that ſelf-examination, whereby you may come to the knowledge of your own Eſtates, whether you have a true work of grace wrought in your hearts or not, ſince I have before ſaid ſo much to this purpoſe; but ſhall now rather direct you, how to exerciſe and expreſs your repentance, Faith and other graces. Only as you go along, if you find your ſelves willing to perform the duties I ſhall mention, you have reaſon to believe that your condition is good; but if you refuſe theſe, you have too much ground to ſuſpect, that all is not well with you. And though it be uſual to diſtinguiſh betwixt directions for an immediate preparation to the Sacrament, and thoſe that are for a right demeanour in the act of Receiving, yet I ſhall chuſe rather to ſpeak of both under the ſame Head, ſince it hath been my buſineſs all along, to bring ſouls to a fitneſs for this work,

and

and ſince in our performance of the duty, our hearts ought to be kept in the ſame diſpoſition and frame that they were brought into, by our preparations for it.

1. Firſt then, I would adviſe you who intend to come to the Lords Table to ſet apart ſome convenient time, for the preparing of your ſouls for this weighty work. It is a moſt ſerious buſineſs, and ought to be ſeriouſly taken in hand: Let nothing here be done curſorily or raſhly. Not that I would have you daunted, as if it was a work of that nature, that you muſt either come trembling, or elſe ſtay away for fear: no, but only ſee you be very ſerious; for ſo you ought to be whenever you have any thing to do with God, even when you ſo much as mention his name, or open a Bible, or come to hear his Word; and therefore being now in a more eſpecial manner to draw near to him, in a duty wherein a miſcarriage is more dangerous, it's very requiſite that you make more ſolemn preparation for it, ſince upon this, the right performance of it doth very much depend. And therefore it is, that I would have you ſet ſome time apart for that purpoſe, which will be moſt convenient in the week, or on the day before you Receive: though I would have you be imployed in this work more than once or twice. But if you are Servants, and ſo are ſtraightned of time, or through poverty are conſtrained to daily labour, you muſt watch for the fitteſt opportunities you can get. And it is no doubt, but you will find time enaugh, if you will but be watchful to redeem time from idleneſs, and vain ways of ſpending it. However it's better to ſpare ſome time from your working, or ſleeping, yea, or eating, than to neglect thoſe works, for which you had your life it ſelf: for it's of far more conſequence, I hope, to ſave your ſouls for ever, than to keep your bodies alive a little while, though you may very well do both, if you be willing.

2. Having ſet apart ſome time, ſee that you be not only got alone, and your hands taken off your buſineſs, but let your hearts be withdrawn from off all worldly things, and ſet, as in the preſence of God, upon an employment of no ſmall conſequence; and humbly beg of God, that he would vouchſafe you his preſence and aſſiſtance in theſe your preparations, and in the work you are preparing for; that he would ſet and keep your minds in a frame ſuitable thereto; and graciouſly own, accept and bleſs you, who in obedience to him have ſet upon this duty. and beg of him, that he would help you in the ſearching of your heart, and reviewing of your life, that you may not only have a ſight of ſin, but a right ſenſe of its vileneſs, that you may not only think of it, but grieve for it; and that all your meditations may be attended with ſuitable affections, and that in all, you may be ſincere and upright, that ſo upon good grounds, you may take comfort in the review of what you ſhall have done, and by this preſent opportunity may be advanc't one ſtep forward toward your eternal reſt.

3. And when you have done thus, Let your firſt work be, *to enter into ſuch a ſerious conſideration of your own eſtate, both by nature and practice, as may be moſt effectual to bring you to a ſound repentance.* The reaſon why I adviſe you to this firſt, is, becauſe you being now about to celebrate the remembrance of the greateſt mercy that ever was manifeſted to mankind, wherein eſpecially love and thankfulneſs are to be exerciſed, it is not poſſible you ſhould feelingly acknowledge it as ſo great a mercy, if you be not very ſenſible of your own miſery,& of that abſolute need you ſtand in of it. Should you offer money to one, who thinks he has no great want of it, he might take it perhaps, but not with that thankfulneſs that another would, who is ready to ſtarve for lack of relief.

A man

A man that perceives himself sinking and drowning, with what readiness will he lay hold on an hand that's held out to save him? Thus, the deeper sense you have of your own vileness, the more will you admire God's goodness, in having any regard to such a worthless wretch as you. The greater you perceive your sins to be, the more need you will see of pardoning mercy, the more you will prize, and the closer you will cleave to Christ, and the more readily will you come hither to receive the seal of your pardon. The lower your humiliations are, the higher ordinarily will you rise in praise and joy. Wherefore it will be very needful, especially if this be the first time of thy receiving, or though it should not, yet I say, it will be needful, and profitable for thee to take an impartiall view of thy self, what a vile unworthy sinner thou art that so thou maist think meanly of thy self as thou ought'st to think and maist be sincerely humbled in the remembrance of all thy miscarriages. And for thy help herein I shall run over a few particulars.

Consider what a sinful nature thou brought'st into the World with thee, being *conceived in sin*, *and shapen in iniquity*, and being hereby a *child of wrath*. Think how ignorant thou art of God, how much at enmity with him naturally; how exceeding prone to all sin and how averse from goodness, as by experience thou hast sadly found, and didst soon begin to find, so that thou maist well acknowledge, *that in thy flesh dwells no good thing*. And then remember with broken sense of heart, how early thou didst set upon a trade of actual sinning, wherein thou hast been so constant all thy days. And call to mind the several ages of thy life which thou hast past through, and the particular sins of those times: the sensuality and pride, and all the follies of thy youth; thy mispence of precious time in all kinds and

and fooliſh ſports and paſtimes. Reflect alſo upon the ſins of thy riper years, if thou art yet come to them, ſuch commonly as company-keeping, drunkenneſs and wantonneſs; or on the other hand, covetouſneſs, over-eager following of the World, to the neglect of Gods ſervice, injuring and over-reaching your neighbours, uncharitableneſs to the poor. Call to mind alſo the places and relations you have lived in, and the ſins you were therein guilty of, as whilſt you were at home with your Parents, at School, or in Service, or any other way diſpos'd of: think whether you were not guilty of telling lies, of diſobedience, ſlothfulneſs, and unfaithfulneſs, which are the uſual ſins of thoſe times. You will find it very profitable and affecting, to be as particular and punctual as you can in this review, as to think at ſuch a place, in ſuch company, I was guilty of ſuch and ſuch ſins. And then fetch in matter for your humiliation, by conſidering the ſeveral aggravations of your ſins, as your being devoted to God by Baptiſm, and yet revolting from him, when you came to the uſe of your reaſon; receiving all you had from him, and yet rebelling againſt him, abuſing your mercies to the diſhonour of the giver. Moreover *your* ſins are much the more hanious, who have had good education, and been brought up to hear and read the Word of God, and have been plainly told what is your duty, and yet have neglected it; who have had many a time convictions of the ſinfulneſs and danger of your courſes, and yet have gone on in them, and have had ſome purpoſes of a reformation, and yet have ſoon loſt them; or it may be under ſome pangs of conſcience, or in a fit of ſickneſs, you have made promiſes of amendment, and yet all came to nothing, but after that you went on in a careleſs courſe of life. You whom I now ſuppoſe to be thorowly converted to God, let it grieve your hearts

thus

thus to remember the ſins of your unregenerate ſtate; that you ſhould live ſo long eſtrang'd from God, and entertain ſuch unworthy thoughts of him, and do ſo much to provoke him, whom you have ſince found ſo good and gracious. How can you with dry eyes think of that time, when you were like others, *fooliſh, diſobedient, deceived, ſerving divers luſts and pleaſures?* Me-thinks you ſhould be fill'd with a kind of horrour when you do but reflect upon that diſmal ſtate: when you think how near you were to the burning Lake, and yet how ſecure; and when you conſider what a meer ſink of loathſome ſins your hearts once were. Oh ſirs! was not that a ſad time, when you could take delight in nothing but in doing your ſelves miſchief? when nothing taſted ſweet but draughts of poiſon? when the very bent of your ſouls was contrary to God and godlineſs? ſo that whatever had a tendancie hereto was nauſeated by you? Prayer was a burden, hearing a burden, holy conference ſtrange and troubleſome, and a godly life was accounted the greateſt toil and ſlavery in the World; ſo that you could go whole daies and weeks without any thought of God, and never feel any hurt in it. Oh can you without ſhame remember, how you have many a time hearkened to Satan's temptation, whilſt the good Spirit of God hath been reſiſted and griev'd? How did your loving Saviour follow you from time to time, and by his Spirit and Miniſters beſeech you that you would be reconcil'd to God? and yet you did ſtubbornly and unkindly put him off, when he had laid open to you what he had done for you, and what advantages he came to bring you, yet you ſlighted his offers, as if they were inconſiderable things. Are you not amazed at your own daring impudence and preſumption, to make the great God wait on you ſo long in vain? He who in a moment could have ſtopt that breath which he gave you,

and

and thrown you into the Hell you deſerved, that yet you durſt diſobey his commands, yea even reject the ſuit he made to you, to ſave your own ſouls. But to proceed, you are alſo to call to mind your miſcarriages, ſince God by the power of his grace brought you home to himſelf, and ſhew'd you ſo much of the evil of ſin, that you acknowledged your former behaviour to be full as vile as I have been repreſenting it, and did ingage your ſelves to him, to become his obedient people. Now conſider how you have anſwered this engagement. And though ſince that time, your ſins may not have been ſo groſs nor ſo frequent as before they were, yet they are now of another nature, and capable of greater aggravations, as being committed againſt greater light and experienced love, even againſt that God who hath freely pardoned you and received you into his favour. Think then how unſuitably you have walk't to the profeſſion you have made, and the means you have enjoy'd, how unthankful you have been for mercies, how unfruitful and unſerviceable ſince you became the ſervants of God, though heretofore you had done ſo much againſt him; think how little you have done as Parents, Maſters, and Neighbours to advance his glory, and conſider and bewail all other failings, in the duties of your Relations. Oh think what folly it was in you ſo much as to venture upon the leaſt ſin, who have been convinced that its your own greateſt hurt; or to ſtart aſide from the holy path, to walk in which you have found to be infinitely moſt for your own eaſe and advantage. Let it grieve you to find ſuch remnants of ſin yet in your ſelves, any inclination to evill and backwardneſs to good. With ſorrow look back upon all your ſlips and haltings, and partial backſlidings, that you have made no more progreſs in holineſs, nor got more good by the privledges vouchſaft you. Be humbled

led in the remembrance of your dulneſs, hypocriſie, formality in religious duties, being either prone to neglect them, or ſlubber them over in a cold and drowſie manner. or elſe to reſt in them. Call to mind alſo your unfaithfulneſs to the many promiſes, you have made of better obedience, in your Prayers, or at the Lords Table; and eſpecially review your carriage ſince the laſt Sacrament, you who have formerly received it. And having by ſuch like conſiderations as theſe affected your hearts with a ſenſe of your iniquities, humbly betake your ſelves to God, and lay open all before him by a free and full confeſſion: acknowledge what wretched hainous ſinners you are, and how unworthy of the leaſt favour, and beg of him to work and increaſe in you that true and kindly ſorrow for ſin, which may fit you for mercy. And ceaſe not by your good will from this confeſſion, till you find your ſouls even melted within you, in the apprehenſion of your own vileneſs, but however ceaſe not, till you find in your hearts a loathing of every ſin, and of your ſelves by reaſon of it. And if you have but an inward ſenſe of your ſores and pollutions, you will not want ſuch words to expreſs it, as will be acceptable to God? only ſee that you be ſincere, and let your heart make your confeſſions rather than your tongue. Labour to be as ſenſible of your caſe, as if you would be if now you ſtood before a King whom you had offended, from whom except you could beg a pardon, you muſt preſently be put to death, of which pardon there was good hope, if he did but perceive you to be really ſorry for your fault. Oh how affectionate and earneſt would you be in this caſe! and would have words at will to expreſs your ſelf. How paſſionately would you acknowledge and bewail the offence you had committed? and with what vehemence profeſs againſt ever being guilty of the like?

And

And how importunately would you beg for mercy, when you ſaw no other way but preſent death, if your importunity did not prevail? Thus behave your ſelves towards God, and believe that he ſtands over you now in your Cloſet, and hearkens to your prayers, and obſerves whether you be hearty in them or not. But remember all this while, it is an inward diſlike and abhorrence of ſin, wherein the truth of your Repentance conſiſts, more than in bare confeſſing it, and ſpeaking againſt it with the greateſt fervour: theſe are required too, but beware of taking up with theſe; Beware I ſay, as ever you hope for mercy, of retaining any ſecret liking to ſin, or the leaſt thoughts of continuing in it ſtill, whilſt with a great deal of ſtir you revile it as ſuch an abominable thing. But rather, if you find in your ſouls a kind of hankering after ſome old luſt, not yet thorowly mortified, betake your ſelves to thoſe conſiderations which may bring you out of love with it, as how little its like to do for you, what an happineſs it doth now, and will hereafter deprive you of, what a miſery it leads to, with other the like formerly laid down; and quit not theſe thoughts, till you find your ſelves turned againſt it. For once again let me aſſure you, then, and never till then, is your Repentance right, when you are not only brought to grieve for ſin, but to hate it; when your hearts are not only broken in the remembrance of it, but are broken off from, and thorowly bent againſt it.

Though this exerciſe of Repentance ſeems moſt properly preparative to the work you are going about, yet in ſuch a penitent humble frame would I have you be, even when you are at the Lords Table. If you eat this bread and mingle the Wine with tears, it will be never the worſe for your ſouls. And muſt it not needs affect thee to behold Chriſts body broken, and his blood

blood poured out here in a figure, and then to think with thy self, This was sin *my* sin; even *my* pride and earthlineſs, and all the wickedneſs of *my* heart and life, was part of that load, which he bare on his own body on the Croſs, when he cried out, *my God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Might not the Lord call to me, and even ſhew me the Print of my many grievous ſins, in his hands and feet, and the deep ſtabs they gave him? and yet ungrateful wretch that I am, how little have I valued this his love? how little hath my heart been affected herewith? where had I been, and what had become of me, if he had not thus undertaken for me? Oh what had my ſins brought upon me, if he had not interpos'd and kept it off? how mad and ſenſleſs have I been, in venturing upon ſin, harbouring and delighting in ſin? Sin, which is ſo hainous a thing, that without ſhedding of blood it muſt not be remitted; and for which no blood, but that of Chriſts could obtain a remiſſion. How more eſpecially hainous then is my guilt, in undervaluing this blood ſo much and ſo long as I have done? How baſe was my heart to give entertainment to ſin, after I had heard what it had done againſt Chriſt? and to deny entertainment to him, after I had heard how much he had done for me? Was his kindneſs ſuch as to bleed for my ſins, and ſhall not I weep for them, eſpecially for the unkindneſs I have ſhewn to him? As God never ſhew'd greater love to Man, than in delivering up his Son for our offences, ſo he never ſhew'd greater hatred of ſin than by this action; and therefore conformably, as we ought hereby to be brought to the greateſt love of God, ſo to the deepeſt hatred of ſin and humiliation for it. But I have formerly more fully ſhewn how the conſideration of Chriſts death, may bring us to true Repentance, and what I there ſpoke chiefly of a change of ſtate,

may

may be applied to the particular exercise of Repentance, wherefore I shall insist no more on this. Onely let me meet with an Objection, that may perhaps be in the minds of some, namely, *That sorrow for sin at this time, scarce seems consistent with, that hope of mercy, that joy and thankfulness, which are chiefly required in the Communicant.* Know therefore, that I press no sorrow, but what is a preparation to joy, and doth even animate and exalt it, whilst the humble Christian reflects upon his own nothingness and unworthiness, and thence is carried forth to the greater admiration of that mercy that hath so favourably regarded him. And take notice farther, that I would have the sense of Divine bounty, chiefly to raise and keep up this humiliation; whilst we think with our selves, *Oh what wretched creatures are we, thus to offend so loving a Father, who notwithstanding all our provocations, is yet compassionate towards us, and upon our return to him is so readily reconciled.* To retain this apprehension of love in the midst of our mournings, will make them most ingenuous, and even pleasant to our souls; and though it will make us sincere and deep in our repentance, yet it will so moderate our spirits, that we shall not *sorow as those without hope*; and I could wish, that Christians in all their sorrowings would observe this rule. But then that such an ingenuous shame and sorrow as this is consistent with the greatest confidence of mercy, there is not the least doubt, for which (to omit all further proof of a matter so plain) see that very fit Text, *Ezek. 16. 62, 63. And I will establish my Covenant with thee, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord, That thou maist remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee, for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God.* It is to be considered moreover, that the promises of joy are principally

cipally made to this frame. The ſpirit of the humble and contrite, God hath promiſed to revive; They that mourn ſhall be comforted. And they who come to the Table of the Lord weeping, are moſt likely to return from thence rejoycing.

4. And when you are wrought to this humiliation for and hatred of ſin, you will eaſily be brought to the next part of your work, which is, *ſteadfaſtly to reſolve by the grace of God, never more to give willing entertainment to the ſame, but to be entirely devoted to God by Jeſus Chriſt, to love, pleaſe, and ſerve him all your dayes.* I have told you how at the Lords Supper you renew your Covenant, to perform thoſe duties which you were engaged to, by being Baptized into the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt. Renouncing carnal ſelf, you profeſs to place your happineſs in the love of God, and no farther to regard or pleaſe your ſelves, than is conſiſtent with his pleaſure; Renouncing the world, your own abilities, righteouſneſs and worthineſs, and all ways to happineſs, which are ſet up againſt Chriſt, you profeſs to take him alone for your Redeemer, and to reſign up your ſelves to him, that he may bring you to the fruition of God; and therefore Renouncing the Devill, who would draw you from God and Chriſt, to gratifie your luſts with earthly things, you profeſs your reſolutions to be lead by the Holy Spirit of God, in thoſe wayes that lead to his everlaſting Kingdom. You who are truly willing to all this, (for to ſuch I ſpeak) I would have you in the moſt ſerious manner, to profeſs the ſame before God, and eſpecially in the Prayers that you make, in preparation for the Sacrament. Bind your ſelves over to him by the ſtricteſt vow, that he ſhall be your God, and you will be his people. Profeſs to him, that he ſhall be the portion of your ſouls, that you will have none in heaven but him, and will deſire

ſire nothink on earth in compariſon of him; that if he will but vouchſafe you his ſaving love in Jeſus Chriſt, you ſhall be indifferent to all things here below, as knowing that in his favour alone you are abundantly provided for. Acknowledge his right to govern you, and diſpoſe of you, being your Maker and Preſerver, infinitely wiſe and good; and engage to take him for your Soveraign and Lord, to render a ſincere, unlimited obedience to his commands, and quietly to ſubmit to his diſpenſations. Profeſs to him, that you relinquiſh all right to your ſelves, and give up all into his hands, to do with you what he pleaſeth; conſecrating all to his glory, whatever he doth or ſhall afford you, being reſolved, through his aſſiſtance, ſo to improve and employ it. Promiſe to him, that neither your own will, nor the will of any mortal man, ſhall be obey'd in contradiction to his. And bethink your ſelves of thoſe ſins, whereof you have been more eſpecially guilty, in thought, word, or deed; and of the duties you have omitted: and engage your ſelves particularly againſt thoſe ſins, and to the performance of thoſe duties. And then remember under what notion you enter into Covenant with God, and what kind of creatures you are, even poor loſt ſinners, loaded with much guilt, which you could never, by any ſatisfaction of your own making, take off from your ſelves; and alſo exceeding weak, ſo that you cannot by your own ſtrength give that obedience to God which he requires, nor vanquiſh the difficulties which you will meet with; wherefore it is of abſolute neceſſity that you accept of Jeſus Chriſt, as your *Deliverer* and *Strength: for he only who hath the Son, hath the Father alſo.* Profeſs then before God your unfeigned willingneſs to cloſe with the Lord JESUS, to all thoſe ends for which he offers himſelf to the world. Acknowledge to him, that you neither expect

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mercy for any merit of your own, nor ſet upon duty in your own might, nor look for acceptance of any ſervice for its own worth, but that you humbly depend upon Chriſt the Mediatour for all that you ſtand in need of: Acknowledge his right to rule over and in you, as having brought you out of ſlavery with his own moſt precious blood, to whoſe mild and gracious Government you will therefore ſubmit your ſelves. Profeſs your willingneſs and earneſt deſire, to have your hearts purged and ſanctified by his Holy Spirit, and your lives thereby directed according to the precepts of the Goſpel. Thus profeſs your acceptance of Chriſt, and ſubmiſſion to the Spirit, that you may be brought into the favour of God, and be enabled to pleaſe and glorifie him by your holy converſation: for all tends to this, even to make you holy in heart and life. Therefore *are we married to Chriſt, that we may bring forth fruit unto God*, Rom. 7. 4. *And the fruits of righteouſneſs are by Jeſus Chriſt unto the glory & praiſe of God*, *Phil* 1. 11. *In him we are created unto good works.* This is the effect of his death and reſurrection, that we might be dead to ſin, but alive unto God, *Rom* 6. throughout They are Chriſt's Diſciples that bring forth much fruit to the glory of God the Father, *John* 15. 8. And therefore is the Spirit of life given us through Jeſus Chriſt, that we may be made free from the power of ſin and death, that the carnal mind might be taken away, and we made ſubject to God, and able to pleaſe him; yea, that we might riſe up to an higher kind of life, more ſpiritual and heavenly than was ordinarily attainable under the Law, *Rom.* 8. the former part of that Chapter. This being then the ſum of all, *to devote your ſelves to God by Jeſus Chriſt, to live in his love and fear, and in ſtrict obedience to his Laws, 'till you ſhall be taken to glory*; you that are firmly purpoſed to do this, and have made promiſes thereof

betwixt God and your own ſouls, do you eat the Bread and drink the Wine in the Sacrament as a confirmation of theſe promiſes. Let this be remembred I beſeech you, whatever you forget, *That hereby you do moſt ſtraightly engage your ſelves to live a Righteous, Sober and Godly life, from this very day, and to the end of your dayes.* This ſome give as the reaſon, why the Name *Sacrament* is put upon Baptiſm and the Lords Supper, becauſe they are of a like nature with that Oath, which Souldiers were wont to take, to be obedient to their General, and rather to dye than to forſake their Colours, which military Oath was called a Sacrament; and thus both by Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper are we conſecrated to the ſervice of God. A very Heathen anciently, when he gave an account of the practice of the Chriſtians, ſaid of them, that they did ſometimes in their aſſemblies, by eating and drinking together, engage one another to abſtain from theft, murder, adultery, and all kind of wickedneſs; ſo right a notion he had of the deſign of this duty. Imagine then you heard Chriſt ſaying, *All that will hearken unto me, and become ſuch as I would have them, both in their hearts and lives, let them come and take the Sacrament, as witneſs of their reſolution to cleave to me.* And let the voice of your Soul in anſwer be, *Lord, I am willing to hearken to thee, to take thee for my Redeemer and Lord, and it is my unfeigned deſire to be holy as thou would'ſt have me, it is my reſolution from this time forward, by the help of thy Spirit, to yeild a ſincere obedience to all thy commands, and not allow my ſelf in any known ſin, whilſt life ſhall laſt, and in witneſs hereof I take this Sacrament, which thou haſt call'd me to.* And thus thou do'ſt plight thy troth to Jeſus Chriſt, by partaking of theſe conſecrated Elements, as friends are wont to break a piece of Silver betwixt them, to bind each other the faſter to the promiſes they make; or as

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the Man and Woman expreſs their conſent to a Marriage, by their uſe of the Ring. And hereby thou do'ſt in effect profeſs, that thou expecteſt Salvation by Chriſt upon no other terms, than as thou ſhalt be found faithful in making and keeping this Covenant with him. Thou mayſt eaſily perceive this is no trifling matter, and therefore good reaſon there is, I ſhould adviſe thee to be ſerious and deliberate in it, leſt by thy hypocriſie thou ſhould'ſt even bind over thy ſelf to damnation: for if thy heart will not conſent to ſuch a Covenant as I have deſcribed, think not I go about to perſwade thee to diſſemble with God. But yet remember, there is nothing in all this, that may afford any ground of heſitation or doubting, whether thou ſhould'ſt do it or not, unleſs thou art in doubt, whether thou had'ſt beſt be ſav'd or damn'd: for except thy heart be brought to ſuch a ſubjection to, and cloſure with Chriſt, it's impoſſible thou ſhould'ſt ever be ſaved by him. This Wedding-garment of Faith and Obedience, which I would have thee put on, is as neceſſary for thy being received into Heaven, as for thy being a welcome Gueſt at this Table. And by the way conſider how you have endangered your Souls, you who have from time to time received Sacraments, and never thought of any ſuch Engagement as this, which yet the very action it ſelf layes upon you, nor ever took care to be faithful thereto. In what a daring manner have you laid your ſelves open to vengeance? And how great is that patience which hath hitherto bore with you? even whilſt you have been wilfully guilty of moſt horrid perjury. I mention not this to drive you to diſpair, no, there is yet hope of mercy concerning this thing, if now at length you are but ſenſible of your miſcarriage, and will carefully reform it for the future.

Whoever you are, that do now from your very

hearts render up your ſelves to God by your Redeemer, doubt not of a gracious acceptance: you that with ſuch deſigns to aſſemble to this Supper, (and none elſe are fit to come there) of you will Chriſt ſay, when he looks upon you as one of his Diſciples who ſat about him, *Behold my mother and my brethren*, Mar. 3. 34. for as he there adds, *ver.* 35. *whoſoever ſhall do the will of God, the ſame is his Brother, Siſter, and Mother.* Yea, to you will the *Lord Almighty* ſay, *I will be a Father unto you, and ye ſhall be my Sons and Daughters*, 2 Cor. 6. 18. and ſafely may you regard your ſelves in this comfortable nearneſs of relation to him, which brings me to the next.

5. You that are thus truly humbled for ſin, and turned from it to God by Jeſus Chriſt, upon good grounds *may, and ought to believe, that God will make good all the promiſes of his Covenant, which he hath made to ſuch as you are.* Whereupon you may with an holy boldneſs beg the ſame at his hands, and accordingly do it. Humbly beſeech him to deal with you according to thoſe gracious promiſes, wherein he hath cauſed you to truſt. And for the ſtrengthning of your faith, conſider ſome of the chief of them, and plead them with God in prayer, and beg the bleſſings contained therein. Pray earneſtly that the *Blood of Chriſt may cleanſe you from all unrighteouſneſs*, that *your iniquities may be remembred no more*, but that you *may have peace with him, being freely juſtified by his grace.* Beſeech him to give you his *Holy Spirit, to carry on the work of faith with power*, to enable you againſt temptations of all ſorts, to fill you with peace and joy, to lead you in the way wherein he would have you to walk, & to *perform that good thing he hath begun in you to the day of Jeſus.* Pray that you may be found in Chriſt, at that great approaching day, and may ſtand before him with boldneſs, and be diſcharged

ged from all accuſations, and ſet with the ſheep on his right hand, and with that little Flock be received into the Kingdom, which he hath promiſed to all that love him. And ſince you are as yet in the body, which ſtands in need of outward comforts and ſupplies, and are in a World where you have relations, friends, and affairs, wherein you are concern'd, you have promiſes touching theſe alſo; and may therefore confidently beg your Heavenly Father, who knows what you need, to take care of you and yours, and furniſh you with what he ſees convenient for you; to direct you in all difficulties, and by his providence ſo to order all your affairs as may tend moſt to his glory, and your good. Ask theſe things of God, and what ever you perceive neceſſary, and doubt not but they ſhall be given unto you more abundantly than you can ask or think, and look upon them as confirmed to you by the Sacrament. But remember alwayes, that it is for Chriſt's ſake that theſe mercies are conferr'd upon you, ſo that you are to acknowledge your ſelves unworthy of the leaſt of them, and confeſs if you had your own deſert, you ſhould be ſtript of all comforts, and be laid under the greateſt miſeries. Profeſs therefore all that you hope for, is on the account of Jeſus Chriſt, who hath purchaſt all things needful for the happineſs of his people, after a forfeiture was made of all by the fall of *Adam*: through him are theſe good things promiſed, and theſe promiſes fulfilled. In the new Covenant founded in his blood, they all accompany his perſon; and are aſcertained to thoſe that cordially receive him, as the Wife by taking a Nobleman to her Husband, is made partaker of his Eſtate and Honours. So that having Chriſt to be yours, all that is in Heaven or Earth to do you good is yours alſo, by vertue of that Covenant which ſhall never fail: faithful is he that hath promiſed, *and will do it.*

Wherefore this Sacrament which you are about to receive, being a Seal of that Covenant, you are to take it as an assurance and pledge, that all the blessings of it, such things as I directed you to pray for, shall be bestowed upon you, in that time and order which God sees best. Here then you see is work for faith, if you would receive the comfort which this Ordinance holds forth. And more particularly, I shall tell you in two words, what it is *for* principally, and in what manner you are here to exercise faith.

1. *Look upon the Sacrament as sealing to you a full and free pardon of all the sins you stand in need of, whether by nature or practice*, so that none of them shall be laid to your charge, so as to condemn you at judgment. And for your clearer proceeding herein, you are to apprehend the Sacrament as joyn'd to the promise of pardon in the Gospel, and so to look upon it as a Seal annext to a Writing, that promiseth mercy to Rebels that submit themselves: And if a King should send his Officers with many such Writings, to a company of men that were risen up in Arms against him, and the Officer should tell them, *Sirs, here's a gracious message sent you from the King, here are papers under his own hand, wherein he assures a Pardon to such of you that will now come in, and here's also his own Seal put to them for your greater assurance, all which for your security, I'le put into your hand presently, if you submit your selves.* They who upon this come in, and take these Papers, have a pardon thereby given them, which they may boldly produce, if afterwards they should be accused. Even thus are you to conceive God's Embassador saying to you: *All you that are willing to receive Jesus Christ to rule over you, and save you, he hath promised in his Gospel to forgive all your sins, and (beside that of Baptism) hath ordain'd the Sacrament of his Supper, as a Seal of this gracious promise,*

miſe, his Inſtrument of pardon; and here I ſtand by his appointment to give out the ſame. You now who find your ſelves willing thus to receive Chriſt, are to take this Sacrament as an aſſurance that this promiſe ſhall be made good to you; and ſo look upon it, and with this quiet your Conſcience, when it is unjuſtly clamorous, and ſilence Satan when he haunts you with temptations to deſpair: Then ſay within thy ſelf, here's the Word of God aſſuring forgiveneſs to all that take Chriſt for their Lord and Saviour, which by his Grace I find my ſelf inclined and enabled to do, and he hath bound this word with his Oath, and to both he hath added his Sacraments as Seals, and ſhall this three-fold Cord be broken? what ſhould give me ſatisfaction, if this do not? wherefore, be gone, Satan, ſhall I not rather believe thou art a Lyar, who telleſt me, repent and believe, and do all that I can, my ſins are ſo great they can never be forgiven, than once ſuſpect that the moſt true God, will ever revoke that which he hath ſaid and ſworn and ſealed to? And at the great Judgment Day Chriſt will own his *Hand* and *Seal*, and then ſolemnly acquit thee, whom he now pardons by his Goſpel. Safely then mayſt thou triumph with the Apoſtle, *Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's Elect? It's God that juſtifieth: Who is he that condemneth? It's Chriſt that died, &c.* And this Chriſt with his whole purpoſe is made over to thee, Oh believing Soul. Even by his Sacrament is his blood as effectually made thine, to waſh off all the Guilt that cleaves to thee, as if thou had'ſt been bath'd in his warm blood to that purpoſe, yea much more effectually.

2. The other direction I would give you is, *That you take the Sacrament as an earneſt of the everlaſting Glory*, which ſhall ſhortly without queſtion be vouchſafe to you, who remain ſtedfaſt in your covenant with God.

Here in like manner you are to look upon the Gospel, as a *deed of gift*, whereby, through Christ, an *Inheritance* in the Heavens is settled upon you, to which *deed* also the Sacrament doth *seal*. Even as an House is made over by the delivery of a *Key*, and Land by a *Turf*, so there is a kind of conveyance of Heaven it self made to you, by the delivery of the Sacramental Bread and Wine into your hands. And when you receive them, imagine you heard God saying to you, *Here, poor Soul, take this in Earnest of that eternal life, which I have prepared for, & will bestow upon thee.* And if the heavenly Kingdom be thus assured to you, on condition of your continuance in the love of God, you need not question but all things needful for your passage thither, are herein comprehended. If you shall have glory given you, then be sure you shall have that Grace which may fit you for, and bring you to it, whereof I shall speak particularly under the next head. And if you are thus richly provided for as to your Souls, do you think your bodies shall be neglected? No, never fear it; whatever shall be found really good for you, shall be vouchsaf'd. What shall you have Christ and his Spirit, Grace, and Glory? And do you question whether you shall have food and raiment? Will the Father make his Son Heir of all when he comes to age, and will he not afford him a maintenance 'till then? Onely refer all your concernments to God, to deal with you as he shall think fit, and question not but he'l dispose of all to your contentment, if you be reasonable. The whole World is in the hands of your Father, and it is not for want of power or love, if you have not the greatest share in it; but it is from his wisdom and mercy, which will rather give you the *best*. *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for you*, and hath given him to you, *how shall he not with him freely give you all things?* Rom. 8. 32.

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Would you have a larger word? Is there any thing you want not contained in this? The like you may ſee, 1 *Cor.* 3. 21, 22. *Things preſent and things to come, all are yours, ye being Chriſts.* And as Godlineſs thus hath the promiſes of this life, and that which is to come, ſo both ſorts of promiſes are here confirmed to you by the Sacrament, which is a Seal of that full Covenant, wherein bleſſings both of the right hand and of the left, are given to Believers.

You may ſee then, I hope, by this time, that this is no common Bread and Wine which is appointed for ſo great purpoſes. If a *twig* was given into your hands, whereby ſome great Eſtate was conveyed to you, you would value it ſure above a common ſtick. Wherefore if you would not be lamentably wanting to your ſelves, and Enemies to your own comforts, I beſeech you, all you that love the Lord Jeſus, know your own priviledges, and fix theſe things firmly on your minds; and let not the greatneſs of them hinder your belief, ſince they are as ſure as great; but ſee that you apprehend a reality in all that is done at this holy Table. See Chriſt himſelf in the Miniſter, ſee alſo the benefits that come by Chriſt in the Bread and Wine, and ſtedfaſtly believe that theſe are given you by Chriſt, as verily as the Elements are given you by the Miniſter. For *pardon, and right to eternal life,* are things to be believed, not felt, ſo that it is by believing that you muſt perceive the comfort of them. Wherefore, beg of God to clear up theſe things to your apprehenſions, to remove doubtings to ſtrengthen your faith, and to joyn the inward Seal of his Spirit, to the outward adminiſtration of his Ordinance. And do you take the boldneſs, though with the greateſt humility, to profeſs to God, that you take this Sacrament as an *earneſt* of all thoſe mercies which you hope for from his bounty, as hereby you deliver

liver up your ſelves, and all you that have and are, to his will and pleaſure. And as an *Earneſt* engageth both the Maſter and Servant, to do according to their agreement, ſo is God graciouſly pleaſed hereby to engage himſelf to his Creatures; ſo that not onely from his Bounty, but from his Juſtice and Faithfulneſs, may you expect whatever he hath promiſed to do for you. There being thus a ſacred Covenant tranſacted betwixt God and your Souls, ſee onely that you be not treacherous, and Heaven and Earth ſhall ſooner fail, than God will depart from one tittle of all that he hath ſaid With confidence may you look upon God as your Father, Chriſt as your Head and Husband, the Holy Spirit as your Comforter and Guide, the Angels as your friends ready at Chriſt's command to do you Service, the Saints in both worlds as your Brethren; and the full enjoyment of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, in the joyful communion of Saints and Angels, your aſſured everlaſting portion.

6. Since you in your ſelves are poor impotent creatures, who *without Chriſt can do nothing*, but muſt be beholden to that Grace, which drew you to this Covenant to hold you in it, and to help you to perform your part; and ſince there is of this Grace, even now to be given out to the prepared Soul, *Let it be your care to get very ſenſible of your ſpiritual wants, and to come hither earneſtly deſiring and expecting a ſupply.* Conſider well with your ſelves, what Graces you find weakeſt and moſt wanting, what duties you are prone moſt to fail in, and humbly beg ſuitable help and aſſiſtance. Examine what temptations you are moſt expoſed to, and oftneſt overcome by, what corruptions you find yet ſtrongeſt in you, and eſpecially what thoſe ſins are to which you are inclined moſt by nature, and cuſtom, or are moſt in danger of by your Employments or converſe in the

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World, and repreſent all this in your Prayers before God, and beg of him more power and ſtrength againſt them, and now by this Ordinance to convey it to you: Look round about, and conſider well the work you have to do, the difficulties you are to grapple with, the ſeveral relations wherein you ſtand, and the duties they bring along with them, and now ſue out for direction and aſſiſtance in all. And for your encouragement, remember what I told you, that God hath engaged himſelf to all you his Covenant-people, to afford you whatever may conduce to your happineſs, now ſince you ſtand in preſent need of the ſupplies of his Grace, you may confidently expect the ſame. He that will bring you to the end, will give you the means. As if a King ſhould call ſome of his poor Subjects, to give them great poſſeſſions in another Country which he had conquered, and ſhould alſo furniſh them with ſtore of money and proviſions for the way, even thus bounteouſly will God deal with you, Oh Believers. He'l put ſtrength into your feet, and revive your fainting ſpirits, that you may hold on your way; you that *wait upon the Lord*, though you have no power or might in your ſelves, yet *ſhall renew your ſtrength, and run and not be weary, and walk and not faint*, till you come to your journeys end.

By faith in Chriſt we are ingrafted into him, as a branch into the Vine, and are related as a Member to the Head, ſo that he is become the root of our life, and from him ſhall ſap and nouriſhment be communicated to our needy Souls. He is the diſpenſer and fountain of Grace, and his Ordinances are as Conduit-pipes, and Conveyances of the ſame. And of this nature is the Lord's Supper. Here Believers are made to *drink into the Spirit*. 1 Cor. 12, 13. Which words have a plain reference to this Sacrament, Baptiſm being mentioned at the beginning of the verſe. Come hither then

then, Oh ye thirſty Souls, and be refreſht with the waters of life that ſhall flow in upon you in abundance. Open your mouths wide, and they ſhall be filled. Be not ſtraitned in your ſelves, for the bowels of Chriſt are not ſtraightned towards you. Bring hither capacious enlarged hearts, & you ſhall carry away accordingly. The anointing of the Spirit, which is ſhed abroad upon you, is like the Widdows Oyl, 2 *Kings* 4. 6. It will not ſtay running whilſt there is room to receive it. Oh why is it then that we are ſo empty? The fault is not in Chriſt, we muſt needs acknowledge: but let us examine whether we have not ſtuft our hearts with other things, that leave little or no room for Grace to be poured in there. Are we not fill'd with the love of earthly things? Is not our delight moſt of all in profits and pleaſures? And our deſires eagerly carried out after them? Do not Creature-comforts ſo poſſeſs and fill us, that they even thruſt forth the Holy Spirit from his habitation? Do we not grieve him by our carnal joyes, and cauſe him to withdraw from us? Oh! for ſhame let it be no longer thus with us. Alas! how little can theſe narrow hearts of ours contain of the fulneſs of God, though they were widened to their utmoſt preſent capacity? And ſhall we pinch and ſtraighten them yet more, by entertaining every trifle there? This is that room which the King of Heaven would have entire to himſelf, and ſhall every common Gueſt, every Beggar be lodged there? Is it fit that Money-changers, and Merchants ſhould fill the Houſe of God? That it ſhould be a Thorow-fare for every Veſſel, every common and unclean thing? Oh let your hearts then be conſecrated as Temples for the Holy Ghoſt, not Dens of ſuch Thieves as rob God of his due, and draw away thoſe deſires and affections which he claims as his own. And now let the Gates of thoſe Temples fly open, that the

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King of Glory may come in. Now in an especial manner let your hearts be emptied of all trash, that they may be fill'd with the good things which are here distributed. If you were set to an heap of Gold, and bidden to carry away as much as you could grasp, you would keep no dirt nor stones in your hand, that you would make them hold so much the less. Loosen your selves then from the inordinate love or thought of any created Good, your Houses or Lands, your pleasures or employments, withdraw your minds as much as possible from all temporal concernments, with which whilst you are taken up, the edge of your desire after Heavenly things is extremely abated. And if you come not hither with great expectations, you are like to be little the better. If you have no higher designs, but with a little seeming Devotion to eat Bread, and drink Wine, then Bread and Wine are the best things that you are like to meet with: For is it probable you should find that which you never look after? But if thou comest hither with an holy greediness after greater measures of Grace, thirsting for the living God, as the Hart pants after the water-brooks, and as the parched ground gapes for the refreshing showers, then fear it not, thy desires shall be gratified. Thou canst not please God better, than by looking for the greatest & best things from him, which bring most glory to himself, and do most good to thy Soul. Beg earnestly then, that by the power of his Spirit accompanying this Ordinance, thou maist partake yet more of a new and Divine nature; that thou maist find strength and vigour diffused through the whole man; and maist now receive some communications of that light and life, which Christ came into the world that his people might have, and that they might have it more abundantly; now pray that his Death and Resurrection may have their power and efficacy upon thee, that virtue may issue forth from him

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for thy healing. Beg, that by this food thy luſts may be poiſoned and deſtroy'd, and every Grace ſtrengthned and increas'd. And be particular in thy deſires. [O that ſomething may be done this day againſt my pride and paſſion, my worldlineſs, and ſenſuality, my diſtruſtful fears and diſcontents. Oh that I may be delivered from that liſtleſneſs, dulneſs, and diſtraction, wherewith I am haunted in holy duties. Oh that I may find my heart hereby drawn nearer to God, and carried out with more unweariedneſs and cheerfulneſs in his ſervice; that I may be better enabled for a conſcientious diſcharge of my duty, in every place and relation that I do ſtand in, and in the whole courſe of my life. Bleſſed God, thou who knoweſt the ſtate of my Soul, give in to me, I beſeech thee, what thou ſeeſt I need moſt. I have an hard heart, Lord ſoften it; a dead heart, Lord enliven it; I am much in the dark, Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me. Make me more humble, holy, and heavenly; Oh take this ſeaſon for coming in upon my Soul, and beſtowing more of thy ſelf upon me, that I may become more like to thee. Theſe, O God, are the mercies thou haſt promiſed to thy people, and bidden them to ask; theſe thou art wont to convey by thine Ordinances; for theſe things therefore do I wait upon thee this day, with no lower aims do I come to thy Table; with ſuch precious things is the Lord Jeſus wont to feaſt his Gueſts, and of his infinite fulneſs it is, that I hope to participate; through him it is I hope to be ſtrengthned with might in my inner man, even to be made ſtrong by the Grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus. Oh, will the Head let a member periſh? Shall a branch wither for want of ſuccour and juice? Bleſſed Saviour, thou who waſt ſo willing to ſhed thy blood for us, art thou not as willing to beſtow the fruits of it upon us? Art thou not ſtill as merciful

ciful and tender as ever thou waſt? Thou who didſt once ſo readily heal diſeaſes, and cure all that came to thee, haſt thou not as much mercy to Souls as to Bodies? Lord, I believe thou art as able and ready to help as ever? *If thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean*, and it is my hope that thou wilt. Outward means without thee cannot do it, yet here thou haſt bid us attend, and thus I do, waiting for the deſcent of thy Holy Spirit. Oh grant the requeſts of thy poor creature; Say to me, *Be it unto thee even as thou wilt*; yea, even as thou wilt, oh Lord, let it be unto me, who art ever readily and ſtrongly inclined to do thy people good.] Thus ſtir up your ſelves, and actuate Faith and ſuch holy breathings as theſe, and be aſſured, ſuch additions of grace as you are fitted for, and God in his infinite wiſdom ſeems meet at preſent to deal out, ſhall be conferr'd upon you; and being refreſht and ſtrengthned with this banquet, you may cheerfully walk on your way to glory.

7. From all that hath been ſaid of the greatneſs of the mercies here commemorated, beſtow'd and ſealed to, it will appear moſt reaſonable and juſt, *that the hearts of all God's faithful ſervants ſhall here be raiſed to the greateſt height of divine love, thankfulneſs, and joy.* I put theſe together, becauſe, though in the notion they are different, yet in the workings of the Soul they uſually go together. That ſame goodneſs which works love and thankfulneſs, cauſeth joy too, as it's begun to be enjoy'd, or ſtrongly hop'd for. And this is a frame moſt proper to a Communicant, all his preparations being much in order to it: Therefore ſhould he get ſenſible of his miſery, and humbled for his ſin, that he may have the more affectionate thankful ſenſe of the mercy that pitied and pardoned him. Wherefore labour much with your ſelves, even beforehand, to riſe up to this ingenuous and pleaſant temper, which will

prove

prove ſo acceptable both to God and your ſelves. Dwell intently upon that amazing mercy, which God hath revealed to mankind in Jeſus Chriſt, which thing the *Angels themſelves deſire to look into:* Ponder well the ſeveral heightning circumſtances thereof; the meanneſs, ſinfulneſs, and miſery of man, the Majeſty of God, the dignity of Chriſt, the greatneſs of his condeſcenſion and ſufferings, the fulneſs and freeneſs of his purchaſe and offers. Study all his dealings with your ſelves in particular, whereby he hath accompliſht in you the deſigns of his love, and continue theſe muſings, 'till you feel a fire of love and joy kindled within you. Let not Satan ſo far have his will of you, as to caſt you into theſe dejections, and groundleſs perplexities, which will rob God of his praiſe, and you of your comfort. Let him not be able to perſwade you that God is cruel and unmerciful, and hardly reconciled to returning ſinners: Have you not the ſtrongeſt, and moſt unanſwerable demonſtration at hand, to confute him? would you deſire, or can you have a greater evidence of the graciouſneſs of his nature, than that very mercy which you are going to remember? even his giving his only Son to dy for us, whilſt we were yet *ungodly & enemies.* And did he of his own free grace, without our asking & againſt our deſerving, provide a Saviour for us, and is he yet unwilling to ſave us? did he find out a means for our reconciliation to himſelf, & is he now backward to be reconciled? Does he importune us to take that, which he is unwilling to give us? Be not, I beſeech you, of ſuch an eaſie belief of the Devil's groſs fallacies, and ſo hardly drawn to believe what God hath not onely ſaid, but done, ſo much to make it paſt all doubtings. See the Apoſtle arguing much after the ſame manner, *Rom.* 5. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. Oh let your hearts then be fill'd with admiration of that love, which God hath herein expreſt

expreſt to men, the wondrous greatneſs whereof is ſuch, that it almoſt ſurpaſſeth our Faith, and doth far ſurpaſs our full comprehenſion. That there ſhou d be away for the recovery of ſelf-deſtroying ſinners, contrived by him whom they had offended, and brought about by the death of his own Son, that they might be raiſed to the higheſt happineſs, even an eternity of the moſt raviſhing joys, in neareſt communion with the Divine Majeſty, and all this to be had for a cordial thankful acceptance: *This is the Lords doing*, and well may it *be marvellous in our eyes*; *Great things hath the Lord done for us, whereof let our ſouls be glad.* If an hoſt of Angels came from heaven to proclaim theſe good tidings of great joy to all people, ſhall not the congregations of Chriſtians eccho back their *Glory be to God in the higheſt*, who hath ſent *on earth peace*, and ſhewn ſuch *good will to men? Oh give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, and his mercy endureth for ever. Let the Redeemed of the Lord ſay ſo, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy. Oh do you praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs, and for his wonderful works to the children of men; who hath ſhewn mercy to ſuch as ſit in darkneſs and in the ſhadow of death, and hath broken the gates of braſs, & cut the barrs of iron in ſunder; and hath ſent his word and healed you, and delivered you from deſtruction. Oh do you ſacrifice the ſacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoycing.* Pſal. 107. Call upon your ſouls with the Pſalmiſt in another place, *Bleſs the Lord, oh my ſoul, and all that is within me bleſs his holy name; Bleſs the Lord, oh my ſoul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgiveth thine iniquities, and healeth all thy diſeaſes; who redeems thy life from deſtruction, and who crowns thee with loving kindneſs and tender mercies*, Pſal. 103. at the begining. Oh think what a deplorable condition we have been in, if God had left us in the hands of Satan, to whom we had

enslaved our selves, and had never lookt after us more. Oh what a dungeon had this world then been! where we should have lived in darkness and fetters, in horrours and torments, and all as but an inlet and passage to miseries infinitely worse, and altogether unavoidable. But oh blessed, and for ever praised be his Name, who hath visited the earth with his goodness, and caused the rejoycing light to shine in dark and disconsolate places, and hat proclaimed liberty to the captive, and shewn a strong hold, to which he hath called the *Prisoners of hope* to turn themselves, having laid help on one that is mighty, sending forth the *prisoners out of the pit by the blood of the Covenant*, Zach. 9. 11. This is that blood which by the Wine in the Sacrament is represented to you, yea, which is thereby put into your hands, and given you to drink, in remembrance of that which was once shed for you. And shall not the hearts-blood of your dearest Lord warm and revive your souls, enflame and advance your love? Will you not now begin that *new song* of the heavenly Chore, *ascribing blessing, honour, glory and power to him that sits upon the throne, & to the Lamb for ever and ever, who by his blood redeemed us, and makes us kings and priests unto God*, Rev. 5. This is that blood to which you owe all that you have or hope for; This quencht those flames, which else had fed upon you for ever; This satisfied that justice, which else had laid hold on you for your disobedience; This purchast an inheritance, which silver and gold could not buy; This *purgeth the conscience from dead works*, and makes the soul fruitful unto God; This pacifies the Conscience, and appeaseth the disturbances that sense of guilt is apt to raise; By this *blood of the Lamb*, it is, *that the Saints* in all their conflicts *do overcome*. And can you withhold the most affectionate hearty thankfulness for this precious all-healing blood? Methinks we

should

ſhould even be pained in our ſelves, as not knowing how to give vent enough to our affections, eſpecially when our bleeding Lord is ſet before us. Oh let him wholly poſſeſs your thoughts, and do you view that tranſcendent love which he manifeſted in his whole courſe, but chiefly in the cloſe of it, that all may beget in you ſome anſwerable returns of love. Read, as you have leiſure, thoſe heavenly diſcourſes which were his Farewell ſermons to his Diſciples, and his laſt prayer for them, which you may find in the 14, 15, 16, 17. Chapters of *John*, and ſee there how love breathes in every line. Follow him to the Garden, and there hearken to his groans, and behold his bloody ſweat, which proclaims him to be *ſick of love*, of a love that would not be quencht by thoſe crimſon ſtreams. No, ſtill he goes on, and go thou after him with the Woman that followed him to his Croſs; and weep not, if thou canſt forbear, whilſt there thou ſeeſt him *die for love*; even for love of thee, poor ſoul, who do'ſt ſincerely love him. Art thou not aſtoniſht at the thoughts of it? What could the Lord Jeſus ſee in ſuch miſerable worms as we, that ſhould incline him to undergo all this on our behalf? Nay, there's the wonder, he ſaw nothing, and therefore he underwent it. Nothing, did I ſay? yes, he ſaw our guilt and defilement; for which he might have juſtly loathed us: But he ſeeing all this our miſery, was rather moved to a compaſſion for us; Such a compaſſion as never dwelt in a mortals breaſt, that he ſhould pity thoſe who pitied not themſelves, and dye to recover thoſe who had even murdered themſelves, yea, that he ſhould die to make them happy, whoſe ſins were the cauſe of his Death, and even merit mercy for ſuch as had no mercy on him, and give *life* to them who took *his* away. All this was voluntarily done by the Son of God, who became Man, on purpoſe that he might die

and do all this for the ſons of men. Let Plays and Fictions be hiſt off the Stage, let Romantick follies be ſhamed into obſcurity: for here is that which alone deſerves the name of *Love*; here's ſuch Truth, as commands our belief; ſuch worth and weight as calls for our regard; and ſuch ſtupendious greatneſs, as may raiſe our wonder. Here behold the power of love in the faireſt diſplay of it, that ever was made to the world, ſince its foundations were firſt laid, beyond which imagination it ſelf cannot aſcend, nay, which falls vaſtly ſhort of it; how vaſtly ſhort then doth expreſſion fall? but yet oh that we could feel as much as that little which we ſpeak! Was it ever before known, that the Shepherd ſhould lay down his life for his ſheep? not for innocent ſheep, but to reduce willful ſtraglers to his Fold; That he who was Lord of all, ſhould die for his Subjects? not for obedient Subjects, but for Rebells appointed to the ſlaughter. Thus continue thy meditations, till they have ſo good an effect upon thee, that if Chriſt ſhould appear to thee at this inſtant, as thou art got alone, and ſhould call thee by Name, as once he did *Peter*, and ask thee, *Soul*, *Loveſt thou me?* thou mighteſt be able truly to return this anſwer, *Lord*, *thou knoweſt that I love thee.* And then to affect thee yet more, conſider of Gods ſaving love in Chriſt particularly revealed to thy ſoul, that he was pleaſed to ſay to thee, *when thou waſt in thy blood*, *Live*; Calling thee out of darkneſs into this marvellous light, laying hold on thee by his Spirit, and recovering thee to himſelf, when thou waſt running far away from him; and many a time preventing and reſtoring thee by his grace, when otherwiſe thou hadſt utterly ruin'd thy ſelf. Oh praiſe him that he left thee not in Satan's kingdom, under the power of thy luſts, but with a ſtrong hand and outſtretched arm brought thee out of

that houſe of bondage; and magnifie his name when thou beholdeſt that blood wherein thy ſins were drowned, as the *Egyptians* in the Red Sea. Oh bleſs his name that he did not ſuffer thee to remain *dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*, yea, that he did not ſtrike thee dead in them, and ſentence thee to the ſecond death, after which there is life no more. This is a fit ſeaſon for recollecting all the ſpecial mercies of thy life, which God hath ſhewn either to ſoul or body, to thy ſelf or thine, all which thou art to look upon as vouchſaft through Chriſt, which makes the mercy infinitely greater.

And when you have thus endeavoured to get your hearts brim-ful with love and joy, come and let them riſe higher, and boil over at the Table of the Lord. Let no ſadneſs appear in your looks, nor a tormenting thought by your good will, ſeize upon your hearts this day. Come *loathing* ſin as much as you are able, but come *loving* Chriſt as much; Have as *low* thoughts of thy ſelf as thou wilt, and be as *humble* as thou canſt in remembrance of all thy vileneſs, but yet let thy *Soul magnifie the Lord, and thy Spirit rejoyce in God thy Saviour.* Thy gracious Lord will not upbraid thee with any former unkindneſs and neglect of his love, which thou art heartily aſham'd of and ſorry for. Wherefore though thou maiſt come bluſhing and weeping, yet come not into his preſence daunted and deſpairing. He died on purpoſe to eaſe your ſouls of thoſe fears, which make you *all your life time ſubject unto bondage.* Will not *you* receive comfort, for whom he hath ſhed his blood that it might be your Cordial? Let him ſee you then improve it this day to that purpoſe: for your health and pleaſure, if it be ſolid, is his delight. And if he would have your joy at any time in this World full, now it is; If you muſt *ever more rejoce*, this I am ſure

is a fit season. This is our most solemn *Thanks-giving Feast*. Oh wonderful! That the commemoration of the *Masters* death should be the *Servants* Feast. It is his pleasure to have it so, and let us thankfully comply therewith. Instead of his Vinegar and Gall, he gives us Bread and Wine, and better things than they. Here he hath made, according to his promise, *Isa.* 25. 6. *A feast of fat things, a feast of Wines on the Lees, of fat things full of marrow, Wines on the Lees well refined.* And you may be sure the Master of this Feast, who entertains his guests with an affection as great as their fare is costly, would not have them sit there sad and dejected, as if they liked not their provisions or thought themselves not welcome. Would it please you to see your friends in such a posture at your Table? Oh question not your welcome, all ye lovers of Christ, but when you are there assembled, imagine that you heard him say to you, *Eat oh friends, drink, yea drink abundantly, oh beloved.* Here he hath brought you into his Banquetting-House, and his Banner over you shall be love. Here will he comfort you with Heavenly *Manna*, and stay with Flaggons all you that are sick of love. You Children of *Abraham*, that come from the slaughter of your lusts, here doth your Lord meet you as his type (*Melchisedeck*) met your Father, *Gen.* 14. 18. Setting before you the Bread and Wine for your refreshment. And here *will he bless you*; He shall cause you to sit under his shadow, and his fruit shall be sweet to your taste. Here may you expect the most comfortable communion with Christ, that is to be had in this lower World. Here then *believing in, & loving him whom you have not seen*, but whom you may here see represented, do you *rejoyce with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.*

8. That your hearts may be more heavenly in this work,

work, and so more apt to be fill'd with joy, and to break out in praise, let me earnestly desire you *here to have an eye to a glorified, as well as a crucified Christ*, to remember not only his humiliation, but his exaltation. It was the mind of Christ, that his Resurrection, rather than his birth or death, should consecrate a weekly thanksgiving, to be observed by the Church in all ages, which should be call'd the Lords own day, and be spent in his praise and service. This being the accomplishment of his labours, his final victory over death, and the grave and all enemies that did assault his own person, the memorial whereof must therefore needs be most rejoycing to his servants: And as his Resurrection cannot be remembred without his birth and death, which must of necessity precede it, no more can his death be here rightly remembred, without we also bear in mind his Resurrection and Assention to Glory. Can we remember what he was, and not think what he is? Sad meetings had we made indeed if our Lord had been held under the power of death, if such a thing may be imagined: All the World then might well be in the disconsolate posture of the two Disciples, that were travailing to *Emaus*, crying out, *We trusted this had been He who should have redeemed Israel*, Luk. 24. 21. Then would our *faith be vain, we should be yet in our sins*. But we may now comfort our selves, and use the Apostles gradation, *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of Gods Elect? It's Christ that died, yea rather that's risen again, and is even at the right hand of God.* And now with joy let this Resurrection and Glory be remembred, as being the fore-runner of yours. When in your thoughts you have descended as low as his Grave, and there stand weeping to think how your sins have slain him, imagine you heard some Angel bespeaking you, in almost the same language that he did the Woman at his Se-

pulchre, *Mar.* 16. 6, 7. *Fear not ye, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified; he is not here: for he is risen as he said, and is gone before you*, not into *Galilee*, but into Heaven, *there shall you see him.* When therefore you shall in this Ordinance see Christ crucified before you, think with your selves, *This is the Lamb that was dead, but is alive, and lives for ever.* By the celebrating of this Sacrament, you are to *shew forth the Lord's death 'till he come.* Remember then he is to *come*, for this second coming would Christ have you keep much in your thoughts as well as his first. He left not this pledge of his love with his Church, as a dying Man leaves some gift with his friends to put them in mind of him whom they shall never see more; but as one who goes along journey, leaves his Picture with his wife, that she may be mindful of him in his absence, and be quickned to long after his return. And good reason have you to be mindful of the Glory of our Lord, since you your selves will be sharers herein, and so at once you remember both. Here I told you, you take an earnest of the everlasting treasures; and the consideration thereof is exceeding necessary, to raise your value of that which will otherwise appear but worthless and mean. And conceive of your selves as in a journey to that Kingdom, having here taken in by the way to refresh your selves, as travellers are wont to turn in and bait. And like the Prophet, 1 *King.* 19. 8. *In the strength of this meal* you are to go on toward the *Mount of God.* These are provisions sent by your *Joseph*, to serve you by the way, 'till you come home to himself. Yet a few more Sacraments, and you shall be past the need of all. Here are some fragrancies and drops of sweetness for the refreshment of Pilgrims, *'till the day breaks, and the shadow flee away, when we shall get up after our Lord to the Mountains of Myrrhe, and the Hill of Frankincense.*

Here

Here a Table is ſpread for us in the Wilderneſs, and ſome Cluſters of Grapes preſt into our Cup, 'till we ſhall come to *Canaan*, and enjoy the Vintage. Behold in this tranſaction at the Lord's Table, an Emblem and ſhadow of the future glory, and let your thoughts take advantage from what is here preſent to aſcend to the joyful contemplation thereof; yet within a while, and you who are his welcome Gueſts, ſhall ſit down with *your Maſter at his Table in his Kingdom, and there ſhall taſte of the fruit of the Vine new with him:* and ſhall eat of a *Manna* that is yet hidden to you, and ſhall exchange your preſent company for the ſociety of innumerable Angels and perfect Saints. And let this ſomething quiet your minds, though not take off the quickneſs of your deſires, all you holy Souls, who are acted by ſo noble and ſtrong a paſſion, that you are impatient of that diſtance, at which you yet find your ſelves from him whom you love, and are even weary of the World, where you cannot fully enjoy him, much more of your own hearts, that are ſo eſtranged from him; comfort your ſelves, for within a very ſhort while your eyes ſhall behold him, and you ſhall be fully ſatisfied in your moſt intimate acceſs and abode with him. You may look back with joy on the redemption Chriſt hath wrought for you, and may look before you, and *lift up your heads with joy, as knowing* the *day* of full and final *Redemption draws nigh*. Only ſee that you now thirſt ardently after that ſpiritual communion with him which is here attainable, in being poſſeſt by him, and cloſely united to him, *that being joyn'd to the Lord, you may become one Spirit*; This is the bleſſed, and onely poſſible tranſubſtantiation, to be *transformed into the likeneſs of Chriſt*, which is of infinitely more advantage to the believing Soul, than if, according to that monſtrous Popiſh fiction, he ſhould chew the very groſs fleſh, and

ſwallow

ſwallow the raw blood of Chriſt? For by this means his *body* would not be changed into ours, but by the change I ſpeak of, our *ſpirits* become like to his. And if now you hold but this Fellowſhip with Chriſt in the Spirit, ſhortly you ſhall have a *Real Preſence*, even to the ſatisfaction of Senſe it ſelf: *Then ſhall you ſee him as he is: for you ſhall be made like to him* in that day of his Appearance. Then indeed ſhall Sacraments vaniſh as uſeleſs Shadows, you having got the Subſtance, Chriſt himſelf. You need then no more behold him in a Glaſs, but ſhall ſee him face to face, and be perfectly changed into his Image. Oh the difference that will be betwixt that clear ſight and this dark, alas through our own fault, too dark remembrance! Oh that's the comfort! we ſhall then have laid by all that ſtupidity and dulneſs, which here attends us whatever we are about. That full view of our bleſſed Lord will for ever cure us of all coldneſs and unbelief, and raviſh us into one eternal affectionate admiration of Divine Love. If that joy which aroſe from Faith and Love, whilſt he was not ſeen, was *unſpeakable and full of glory*, how inconceivable, how tranſcendently glorious muſt that be which ſhall ariſe from his immediate ſight? If it be ſuch a precious priviledge to have a right to Heaven here ſolemnly given us, what will it be to enter upon actual poſſeſſion? Oh then, Chriſtians, whilſt you are remembring Chriſt at his Table, let it rejoyce your hearts to conſider, that he is remembring you at his Father's right hand, and thither will ſhortly exalt you. All you whom the King of Glory now eſpouſeth to himſelf as it were by Proxy, as Princes take Wives by their Ambaſſadors, remember that the day is haſtning, when your Marriage ſhall be more publickly and triumphantly ſolemnized: when all you bleſſed ones ſhall be call'd to the great Marriage-Supper of the Lamb.

Yet

Yet a very little while, and he that ſhall come, will come, and will not tarry: And do you not get your ſouls mounted as high as you can climb, by all the means that are afforded you, and ſtand ever wiſhly looking, and diligently preparing for his appearance; and never ſlack your watch, nor let your expectations cool, 'till either you ſee him coming in the Clouds, or your ſelves ſhall be taken up beyond them.

With ſome ſuch Meditations as theſe, which I have ſuggeſted to you under each Head, let your thoughts be taken up whilſt you are imployed in this duty, as you ſhall find your ſelves moſt inclined, and as God's Spirit ſhall direct you: for you need not confine your ſelf as to the method and form, but rather let your affections have their free courſe. Onely ſee that you watch narrowly over your hearts through the whole work, that deadneſs and diſtractions may not poſſeſs you. Keep up a ſtrong ſenſe of God's preſence with you, and often lift up your hearts to him for life and quickning. And let all the Powers of your Souls be ſummoned up, and engaged in this action, with all poſſible vigour and cloſeneſs. Let your minds be kept clear feom ſadning, and from impertinent thoughts, that you may *attend upon the Lord without diſtraction*, and be more capable of thoſe ſweet foretaſts of his goodneſs, which may be as a certain pledge of your everlaſting enjoyment of all that he hath in ſtore for his people.

9. Laſtly, let me in a word or two direct you to be *careful in the exerciſe of brotherly love.* I need not ſtand, I hope, to repeat the advice I gave you, to get all breaches made up betwixt your ſelves and brethren; to do all that in you lies to obtain peace; and if that cannot be had, yet to forgive all injuries that have been done you, and to cleanſe your minds from rancour and malice, and all deſire of revenge; to this let the *love of Chriſt conſtrain you.* And

And moreover, let your hearts be let out with a ſincere and ſtrong affection, towards all your Fellow-members of that body, whereof Chriſt is the Head. A pleaſant ſight it will be to your Maſter who is in Heaven, to look down upon you his Diſciples, and ſee you here feaſting together in mutual love and delight, in the remembrance of all that love which he hath ſhewn to you, and in the joyful expectation of what farther he hath promiſed. And whilſt your love is ſtirred up to Chriſt himſelf, it cannot chuſe but be imparted to his friends that are in ſight; ſuch who ſincerely love him, on whom he hath ſet his heart, and hath ſhed on them his Spirit, whereby they are made like to him, and therefore muſt needs be lovely in your eyes to whom *Chriſt is precious*; as being alſo by this ſame Spirit made like to your ſelves; and when in your joyning with them in this ſacred action, you remember that theſe ſhall be your everlaſting companions in the joy of your Lord, and ſhall there joyn with you in ſounding forth his praiſes; this will farther engage you to them, as being heirs together of the grace of God, and will work in you the beginnings of that love which will hereafter be perfect and perpetual. Whilſt your love is built upon ſuch a right and catholick principles as theſe, being placed upon a Chriſtian as a Chriſtian, you hold a communion in the Spirit with all true Chriſtians throughout the world; though your affections will be moſt ſenſibly enlarged to thoſe that you know, and with whom you hold a local communion in the worſhip of God. And your joint aſſembling at this Table is a badge of your mutual love, and an engagement to the firm continuance of it. Here are you made *to drink into one Spirit*, by which you were Baptized into *one body*, according to that Text I named, 1 *Cor.* 12, 13. This *Sacrament* is, if I may ſo call it, an *Holy Philtre*, whereby Believers are united in more fervent

vent love to their common Head, and to one another. The blood of Christ is the onely Cement and Soder of Souls. And this is that Christian love which they are taught of God, to which they are inclined by their new nature, and which will easily be brought into exercise, where the Grace is first wrought in the heart; wherefore it's needless to stay longer hereon, having also spoke somewhat largely to it before. Onely one thing let me suggest, before I conclude this, namely, that you take care to give a practical demonstration of this love, by *contributing according to your abilities to the necessities of the poor members of Christ.* This is a sacrifice wherewith God is well pleased; a work never out of season, but now most seasonable; being an evidence not onely of your compassion to the poor, but of the stedfastness of your belief in Christ and his Promises, and of your thankfulness for his bounty; therefore you find both these mentioned together, *Heb.* 13. 15, 16. *As we must offer thanks,* so *we must not forget to do good and communicate.* To quicken you to this charity, both now and any other time, when fit objects are presented, let me onely desire you to imagine to your selves, that the Lord Jesus, who was willing to part with his blood for you, and thinks not an infinite glory too great to give you, upon most easie terms, that even he comes to you in one of his necessitous members, to see what you can find in your hearts to bestow upon him; if you that have Estates think he deserves nothing, let him have nothing; if he deserve but a little, give him but a little; if your lusts have more right to your riches than he, then let your lusts have them rather than he. Let Christ in his members starve, whilst pride and luxury are maintained, if you think this be just. If you can improve your Estates better some other way, take what you think the most gainful course. For remember, Christ himself needs

not

not any thing you have or can do, only he'l try the kindneſs of your hearts. His is the Earth, and the fulneſs thereof, and even his poor Servants can he ſufficiently provide for without you. Wherefore if you give not willingly and cheerfully, you may keep your money to your ſelf, for any good that an extorted charity is like to do you. But remember alſo, you will be ſure to loſe and leave all that, which God hath not, one way or other; but by giving it to him you ſend it before you; and when all things here below fail, you ſhall enjoy it with infinite advantage in the everlaſting Habitations. And let this ſuffice by way of Direction for your preparation to, and carriage in receiving. A few words for your behaviour afterwards, and I ſhall come to a concluſion.

CHAP. XVII.

Directions for the Duty after the Sacrament.

1. WHen you come home, get alone, and bleſs God for the liberty and opportunity of a Sacrament, which he hath afforded you, and for all the priviledges that are thereby conferr'd upon you. And let your Souls chew the Cud, and retain the Savour of thoſe pleaſant things you have been entertained with; keep them ſtill lifted up, and exceedingly gladded, in the ſenſe of that love which you have this day been celebrating and taſting, in the believe of that pardon which you have received, in the hope of that Grace and Glory which have been aſſured to you. Meditations of Heaven, and the exerciſe of thankfulneſs, are now very proper works Conſider alſo what you have done, what an obligation you have laid upon your ſelf, how you

you are no longer your own man, having made a resignation of your self to God by Jesus Christ: And beg the assistance of his Holy Spirit, to enable you to stedfastness and perseverance in this holy Covenant whilst life shall last; and beseech him, that the Ordinance you have been made partaker of, may become effectual to your Souls to all those ends that it was designed for, and which are attainable by it. *Think it not enough to read over these things, I intreat thee, but do accordingly, and now betake thy self to consideration and Prayer to those ends I have expresst.* Review moreover, what your miscarriages have been, and humbly beg of God to forgive either want of due preparation, or coldness and distractions; that your hearts have not been affected suitably to the importance and excellency of the duty, and the Majesty of him with whom you have herein had to do. And be heartily thankful for any measure of life and affection, any raisedness and comfort that God hath been pleased to vouchsafe you. And here by the way let me caution all humble Christians to beware of a mistake to which they are too prone: to wit, to judge of their profiting in this and other duties by their present feeling, and so to think they get no good, except their Souls are as it were lift up and ravisht with sensible joyes; and these only they take for evidences of God's acceptance, and the having of communion with him. But by this means you will often plunge your selves into needless sorrows, and load your selves with unjust censures; and which is worse, you will hereby become less thankful to God, as thinking you have received little advantage, because you found not those delights you expected; and will be in danger of becoming weary of the work, and ready to throw it off, as thinking it unprofitable. Wherefore to avoid these ill consequentes, and the mistake that begets them, consider well,

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That it is the uprightneſs and ſincerity of your hearts in the performance of your duty which may adminiſter moſt ground of comfort to you when you reflect upon it: for be aſſured if you have this ornament, you were really acceptable to him that lookt down upon you, though this acceptance might not be teſtified with the giving in of any extraordinary joy. Let it not then trouble you, as if God was not well pleaſed with you, becauſe your affections were not raiſed up to an higher pitch, ſince he doth not look ſo much at fits of paſſion, as at the ſteady bent, and tenour of the Soul. Nor think becauſe you miſt of great joys, that you had no favour from, nor communion with God: for conſider again, *that the trueſt communion with God, is to enjoy the communications of his grace to your ſouls, whereby you are made conformable to him:* & you may enjoy theſe ſaving influences of the Spirit, when you cannot feel his more abundant conſolations. Moreover, the fruit of this Ordinance is not ſo much to be diſcerned at preſent, as in your after-converſation. For the great benefit you are to expect, being to receive farther meaſures of Grace from the Holy Spirit accompanying theſe means, it cannot be well known what Grace you have received, 'till you come to the exerciſe of it, when temptations ſhall aſſault you. And, to allude to the Apoſtle's words in another caſe, though this Ordinance may *not at preſent be joyous yet it may afterward yeild the peaceable fruit of righteouſneſs* to thoſe that are converſant therein. And laſtly, if you are but ſincere, as I ſaid, in your covenanting with God, it is your duty to believe, that you have this day received from him a Seal to the promiſe of pardon and eternal life, and in this belief may you take much rational and ſolid comfort, which otherwiſe you are not like to find: And this is the ordinary way whereby the Spirit conveys comfort to the Soul; firſt working in you a belief,

that

that the promiſes of God are in themſelves moſt true, & enlightning you to the knowledg of your own ſouls, and then enabling you to apply theſe promiſes to your ſelves as being ſuch to whom they belong. Thus the Apoſtle tells us, their rejoycing was from the teſtimony their Conſcience gave of their ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. Wherefore you are not ſo much to expect any extraordinary immediate aſſurance from the Spirit that you are the Lords; but ſee to get good grounds for your faith, and ſo to have your hearts fill'd with *peace and joy in believing.* Yet do not miſinterpret what I have ſaid, thence to indulge your ſelves in any ſloth or dulneſs, or to content your ſelves with the bare doing of the work, without heeding the frame of your heart therein: no, but take as much pains as you can, to raiſe them to the greateſt ſenſibleneſs and affection; and if you do ſo, you may reaſonably expect to find much ſweetneſs and ſatisfaction in the work it ſelf: but my meaning in this caution is, that you ſhould not look ſo much at the feeling of extraordinary comforts, as at the integrity of your hearts in vowing your ſelves to God, and the continuing ſtedfaſtneſs of your reſolutions to be true to theſe vows.

2. And that's the next thing I would exhort you to, *even to diſcover this inward truth and ſincerity, by your future holy and exact walking*; This is that which muſt crown all the reſt. I may ſay to you as *Moſes* to the *Iſraelites*, Deut. 26. 16, 17. *You have this day avouched the Lord to be your God to walk in his wayes, and keep his ſtatutes; and the Lord hath avouched you to be his peculiar people*; and you have promiſed to take Chriſt for your Husband and Lord, to live in love and obedience to him, as you hope to be ſaved by him. One thing now remains, *that you go and do likewiſe.* Say with the Pſalmiſt, *I have ſworn and will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments*, Pſal. 119. 106. Now you have

been remembring him *that ſuffered in the fleſh, arm your ſelves with this mind, no longer to live the reſt of your time in the fleſh to the luſts of men, but to the will of God*, 1 Pet. 4. 1, 2, 3. Let it not happen to you according to the Proverb, *the Dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the ſow that was waſht to her wallowing in the mire. If God have ſpoke peace to your ſouls, turn not you again to folly.* Call to mind particularly what ſins you confeſt and promiſed to forſake, and do accordingly. You that have been guilty of drunkenneſs or gluttony, fornication and wantonneſs, pride or covetouſneſs, be ſo no more; you that have been wont to ſpend your time in idleneſs and vanity, in ſinful company or exceſſive recreations, ſpend it ſo no more; you that have been wont to give way to your exorbitant paſſions, and ſuffered them to break forth in unſeemly actions and language, do ſo no longer. You that are Maſters or Servants, Parents or Children, Husbands or Wives, conſider well what particular duties your relations call for, and be faithful in the performance of them. You that are Subjects, obey them that are ſet over you in the Lord. Towards your neighbours, and all with whom you converſe, be juſt, honeſt, loving and courteous, avoiding all backbiting, lying and ſlandering, all fooliſh and filthy ſpeaking. Be compaſſionate and charitable to all that need your help in one ſort or another. Be conſciencious for the future in the more immediate ſervice of God: be frequent and ſerious in his worſhip, both in publick and private, alone and with your families. Beware of ſwearing and curſing, or of taking the holy name of God or Chriſt in vain; make not mention of him in your common diſcourſe without due reverence, and that you are not like to have, if at every turn you are crying oh God and oh Lord, as is the cuſtome of careleſs people. Profane no more Lords-dayes as you may have formerly done, but improve them to your

your ſouls good. Whatever talent you have, of wealth, wit, time or honour, employ it to his honour who entruſted you therewith; in all things ſtudy to pleaſe God, and ſo commit your ſelves and all concernments to his Will, and quietly ſubmit to all his dealings with you without murmuring or repining. To a ſincere endeavour after all this, you have bound your ſelves by the Sacrament, where you have taken God to be your God, and have profeſt your ſelves his people. Wherefore, I beſeech you beware of that dangerous, and yet too common miſtake, *To think this weighty action terminates in it ſelf, and that all's done when the work's over.* I have endeavoured all a long to prevent this falſe conceit, and I care not how oft I inculcate it: for if this be not removed, all my labour will be loſt, and ſo will yours too, yea, and worſe than loſt: your receiving of Sacraments will then prove but an idle unprofitable ceremony, and will help forward your damnation rather than your ſalvation, whilſt you heed not the deſign of it nor improve it to its due end. What would you think of that woman, that when ſhe had promiſed a man to be his wife, and was ſolemnly married to him in the face of the Congregation, ſhould think there was now nothing more required of her, but that ſhe might go whether ſhe liſt: and live with whom ſhe pleaſed? Even juſt ſuch is your folly and groſs abſurdity, who when you have been in the moſt ſolemn manner engaging your ſelves to God, and have taken the Sacrament upon it, that you will live in obedience to him, then think that you may go away and live as you liſt. Beware how you make ſuch miſtakes as theſe: for believe it, God's in earneſt, whether you are or not: if you would not have him take you at your word, you had better never have made ſuch fair promiſes. Since then the great deſign of this duty, is, to be an engagement to, and an help for ho-

lineſs of life, I ſhall finiſh this Treatiſe with a direction or two for the promoting and carrying on the ſame.

1. And to that end firſt let me adviſe you, *to be frequent in conſidering the engagement you have hereby laid upon your ſelves*, and let that hold and quicken you to faithfulneſs. This is the principal thing which we are to do in order to the due improvement of Sacraments to our advantage, even to remember often, what a ſtrict Covenant we thereby entred into, that by the remembrance thereof we may be the more aw'd and reſtrain'd from doing any thing againſt it. Thus ought you to make uſe of your Baptiſm, which is, I doubt, too ſeldome minded; often you ſhould think, how abſolutely you are bound to take him for your God, to whom you were ſo early devoted; remember the end of it, and now ſee to anſwer and attain it, which you may find fully expreſt, *Rom.* 6.3,4. *Therefore are we buried with Chriſt by Baptiſm into his Death, that like as Chriſt was raiſed up from the dead by* (or *for*) *the glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of life.* Whenever you ſee a Child baptized, let it bring to your mind, that you were once ſo dedicated to God, and admitted into his Church, and then think how you ought to walk, who have ſuch a Bond upon you. And thus improve the Lord's Supper, where you have perſonally owned, and renewed your Covenant with God. Eſpecially make this uſe of it when you meet with any temptation to ſin whatever, or when you begin to grow careleſs and remiſs in your carriage. If old companions ſhould ſet upon you, and entice you, or if your own heart ſhould incline you to any former ſinful courſes, then ſay with your ſelves, how can I do this, and go back from the Vow that I have made? No, I muſt not, I will not; the Oath of God is upon me, and ſhall I be forſworn with the living and true God? How ſeverely will he

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avenge himſelf on all ſuch diſſemblers? wicked *Herod* ſeemed ſo fearful of Perjury, that he permitted the murdering of a Prophet to avoid it, and ſhall I be guilty of it, rather than deſtroy my luſts, God's and my own greateſt enemies? Moſt juſtly may I argue, that for *my oaths ſake, and for thoſe that ſate with me*, I will not do thus: for not one of my fellow-communicants but might witneſs to God againſt me, that they ſaw me make a Covenant with him. And God himſelf who ſtood over me will be witneſs, as well as judge. How then ſhould I appear before him with this heinous guilt upon me? Wherefore, *Depart from me, ye evil Doers, for I will keep the commandements of my God.* If you'l come along with me, and walk in the holy path, come and welcome; but never hope to draw me back again with you, into thoſe ways that have coſt me ſo dear, and which I have proteſted againſt. I am now no company for you: *for I have taken the Sacrament.* Depart Satan, and tempt me not from my allegiance to my Lord and Maſter, I will not forſake him; I have obliged my ſelf afreſh to be a Chriſtian, a ſworn enemy to thy Kingdom, and a faithful Souldier under Chriſt's Banner, therefore depart from me: *for I have taken the Sacrament.* And think moreover with thy ſelf, Hath God been ſo gracious to me, as to vouchſafe me a pardon for all former tranſgreſſions, and to ſeal it to me at his Table, and ſhall I go, and wilfully run upon the ſcore again? Should I thus turn his grace into wantonneſs and abuſe his patience, how juſtly might I fear that his anger will be kindled againſt me, and that he will no more have mercy upon me? He, I am ſure, will be true to his promiſes, and ſhall I be falſe to mine, and ſo fall under his threatnings? And after this manner quicken your ſelves to duty, when ever you are apt to grow liſtleſs to any part of God's ſervice; and alſo quiet your

ſpirits, when they are ready to riſe up in tumult and diſcontent under any croſs that befalls you. Then think, *I have reſigned my ſelf to God as a Loving Father, let him do with me what he pleaſe: therefore be ſtill my heart and rebel not againſt, nor murmur at his righteous will.* If you can but thus find you ſelves more ſtrongly bent againſt ſin, and better able to put off temptations to it, this is the ſureſt evidence you can have of profiting by the Sacrament.

And beware of imagining, that any ſpace of time can wear out the force of that obligation, which is here laid upon you; which, as unreaſonable as it is, one would think was the opinion of multitudes: for they'l be very demure, and ſolemn a little before they go to the Communion, and a day or two after, but within a very little while, all ſeems forgotten, and they are juſt ſuch as they were before. But for certain, God forgets not their promiſes, though they do, nor will he forget their breach of them, as they will one day find to their coſt, if they take not another courſe, The *bonds* you are entred into to render homage and obedience to God, will never be *cancelled:* for this is a debt you will owe as long as you live, though you are always paying it. Baptiſm will be as ſtrong an engagement upon you to godlineſs when you are ſixty, as when you are but ſixteen. And the ſame ſtrictneſs the Lords Supper binds you to for a day, to the ſame doth it bind you all your days. Think now what an horrible thing it wou'd be to run into drunkenneſs, whoredom, or quarrelling, the ſame day you have received it, and know your ſin is little leſs hainous, though it be a month or two or twenty after it: for this breaks your oath as well as that. If the Wife be guilty of Adultery twenty years after marriage, her crime is as great, as if it had been within a week after: for ſhe had oblig'd her ſelf to conjugal fidelity,

fidelity, as long as she and her Husband should live. And thus your Covenant with God is not for a Month, or Year only, but for your whole lives. If you should never but once have opportunity to receive the Sacrament, this would ever after remain a forcible engagement upon you: but yet God in his wisdom and good providence hath ordered, that this duty should be frequently repeated, that it might the more work upon, and affect our mindes, who are prone to be so forgetful and dull. Remember then, the matter is now out of your hands; you have given away your selves to God, and cannot revoke this gift, since indeed you gave him nothing but what was his own before. *After these vows there is no inquiry to be made,* whether they should be kept or not. Yet, thus much I'le say to you, if you can find a greater portion and surer friend than God, a better Master than Christ, better work than his service, better wages than life eternal, you may take your choice: for I would wish you to nothing for your hurt or loss, nor doth God you may be sure, that blessed Beeing, who wants nothing out of himself, nor envies his Creatures any thing that's truly good for them: but 'till you can thus better dispose of your selves, keep your first love, and if you will keep it 'till then, I shall never question your perseverance to the last.

And as you are thus to improve this Ordinance to quicken you to, and help you in your duty, so may you make advantage of it for your comfort, by remembring how God stands engaged to you by that Covenant to which he hath here set his seal, and which he will be sure to perform to you that depart not from him With this consideration repell all temptations to excessive doubtings and despair. When the remembrance of former sins is ready to overwhelm you, have recourse to your sealed pardon, and confidently take the comfort it affords

fords you. When you find the remnants of corruption yet so strong within you, that you are afraid you shall never hold out, remember the Holy Ghost is in Covenant with you to assist you in your combat, and will bring you off Conquerer, if you throw not away your weapons: And let this encourage you the more to beg his assistance, yea in all your addresses to God let it strengthen your faith to apprehend him, as in covenant with you. And if you are surprized by any sin, yet whilst it's matter of grief and shame to you, and you are resolv'd to be more watchful for the time to come, let it not cast you into such a sorrow as tends onely to disquiet and consume your spirits; but remember God hath assured you through Christ the forgiveness of such weaknesses, and they shall not put you out of Covenant with him; but know, if you are hereupon a whit the more encouraged to any sin, it is a very great sign that this promise of pardon at present belongs not to you. In a word, whatever difficulties you are plunged into, relating to Soul or Body, let this still uphold you, to consider, that God hath engag'd himself to be with you in all estates and conditions, and to order all things, so that the issue of them shall be for your advantage. And thus by a frequent consideration of your own engagements at the Lord's Table, and of the priviledges thereby conferr'd upon you, you will find your selves not only comforted and cheared, but very much advantaged for the walking on more steadily in the ways of holiness.

2. And to the same end my next counsel is, *That the Lord Jesus, whom you have here been remembring, may ever be fresh in your thoughts.* Let not your remembrance of him be confin'd to Sacrament-Seasons, but let him ever dwell in your hearts by faith and love. Set his example before you, and labour *to walk as he walkt*, who counted it his *meat and drink to be doing his Fathers will.*

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Behave your ſelf as you believe he would have done, was he in your caſe. Conſider how meek and lowly he was: how little he regarded, yea how much he contemned the riches, honours and applauſe of the World, and learn you to value them at the ſame rate. Conſider how patient he was in ſuffering; how courteous and gentle to all, to the vileſt ſinners and his bittereſt enemies, doing hurt to none, but ſeeking the good of all: Copy out this leſſon alſo. Willingly deny your ſelves, take up your croſs and follow him; Grudge not to be conformed to him, though in ſuffering it ſelf, and complain not 'till you are in a worſe caſe than he was, who had not where to lay his head. It's like you think, if Chriſt was on earth, you'd follow him, though but in the company of poor Women and Fiſher-men, and though the moſt of the World ſhould laugh at you for ſo doing, why know, hee'l take it as well at your hands, if you will but tread in his foot ſteps, and adhere faithfully to his intereſt, though it ſhould coſt you the loſs of all you had, and of life it ſelf. And let the *death* of Chriſt be much in your thoughts; let the love of God which was herein ſhewn, be your daily, delightful ſtudy, and ever leave a ſweet tincture upon your ſpirits, that by the power of love you may be moved and carried on in the whole of your duty; Let this ſhame and drive you from ſin, let this make you laborious and unwearied in his ſervice. When you are ſet upon by a temptation, ſtay ſo long as to ſet a bleeding Saviour before you: and think how you have much ſuch a caſe now before you as the *Jews* once had; to wit, whether *Chriſt* or *Barrabas* ſhould be preferr'd, whether your luſt ſhould be ſubdued, or your Lord crucified afreſh; If you approve of the *Jews* choice in this caſe, you had beſt imitate them. If that which would murder your ſoul deſerve to be ſpared, rather than he who dyed to ſave it, then go on, give Chriſt a ſtab, and ſin boldly. Conſider further how Chriſt by his death hath acquired a title to you, ſo that *you muſt glorifie him both with body and ſoul, as being not your own, but bought with a price.* *Bought* you are, not out of the hands of the Father, that you ſhould now have liberty to ſin againſt him, but out of the hands of Satan, that being *free from ſin*, you may become *ſubject to God, and the ſervants of righteouſneſs.* How willfully blinde are they who take the more liberty in ſin, from the conſideration of that death, which was undergone to *redeem us from a vain converſation?* 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. Where's that Man's reaſon and ingenuity, who when he was fallen into his maſters diſpleaſure, and brought into favour again by the great induſtry of the Son, ſhould think he might now ſafely diſobey his maſter? Though the Son pitied the ſervant ſo much; that he was loth to ſee him periſh; yet he loves his Father ſo well, that he never

never purchas'd an allowance for his disobedience; and indeed the servants *disobedience* is his *destruction*. Christ died once to save the penitent, but he'l never die more to save those that remain wilfully disobedient. Consider also, Christ by his death hath purchas'd abundant grace for the supply of all your wants, and now being at the Fathers right hand, hath full power to give out of this store, wherefore make use of him to obtain the same. Even as the *Egyptians* received food from *Pharoah* by the hands of *Joseph*, so must you receive all you have from the Father by his Son Jesus. Let then the very *life you live in the flesh be by faith in the Son of God*. By earnest desires vented in fervent prayers, be ever deriving virtue and vigour from him your head. Be as desirous and craving as you are necessitous, as hungry as you are empty, that the good God, according to the riches of his grace, may furnish you with all plenty of spiritual blessings, 'till you shall come up to the *measure of the stature of Christ's own fulness*, Eph. 4. 13.

3. If you would thus grow in grace, *Be diligent in the use of all the means of grace which Christ hath afforded, and let them be used and improved as means*. You must, I have told you, be much in earnest Prayer to God in the name of Christ, for whatever you are wanting in. Let not one day pass without the practice of this duty; you that have Families call them together, and pray with them morning and evening. If you neglect this, how little do you differ from those Heathens who *call not upon God*, and upon whom he will *pour out his wrath*. Be diligent in attending to the publick preaching of the Word, and prepare your selves before hand, with a resolution to obey what shall be made known to you to be the will of God, and beg his blessing on what you hear. Consider when you come home, wherein you are particularly concern'd in what you have heard, and accordingly follow it, Setting against that sin, or upon that duty, that you are thereby convinc't of When you can get time, spend it in reading Gods Word, and good Books, which may explain and enforce that Word. Especially you that have not much time on the week days, spend the remainder of the Lords day, after publick worship, in some such good employment, and waste it not in idleness: no nor an hour at any other time. Read also to and with your Family, and ponder it afterwards, that it may be more profitable to you. Often discourse one with another about the matters of your souls, soberly and seriously; that you may afford each other what help you can. It would be exceeding well, if when you sit with your neighbours, you would be thus employed in holy savoury conference to the use of edifying, rather than in idle chatting and talking of persons, and things that concern you not. But

especially

especially they who are of the same famil'y, and are more neerly related, have more opportunity and engagement hereto, and should be *admonishing one another daily, and provoking to love and good works*. For the Lords Supper, I have already directed you at large, and I hope you will practise answerably, and be frequent therein, not ordinarily neglecting any opportunity when you are call'd to it. But as I desire you not to neglect these exercises of Religion, so on the other hand as earnestly I would wish you to beware of resting in them, as thinking all Religion is confin'd to them, and so becoming less careful of your carriage, as to justice, temperance, inward piety, and all virtuous actions. Methinks the wretched error of those Sects that throw off all external duties of worship, and cry up themselves as above Ordinances, may teach this wholesom lesson to all professing Christians, to beware of resting in these things and framing to themselves a Religion out of them. These I grant are parts of obedience to God: for he hath commanded them and they are wayes for the exercise and encrease of our graces, and to be as helps to godliness; but to think that they give any discharge from the practice of godliness, and make amends for sins we are loth to leave, for which we do as it were compound with God by these formalities, making sin our pleasure, and his service a pennance for it; these are conceits so gross, that methinks none but a Papist or one willing'y ignorant should entertain them. Religion is no road of performances, but a new nature attended with a new life; It is the subjection of the soul to the will of God expressing it self in all commanded acts of obedience; an eager and ingenuous pursuance after the blessed God in all those wayes wherein he is to be found, and whereby he communicates himself to the soul of Man; so that there is no contradiction betwixt inward holiness and outward duties, but much what the same relation, that there is betwixt *life* and eating: breathing and motion: for in these the divine life is expres't, exercised and nourished. But to think that Sacraments, Prayers and hearing, &c. may serve turn without any inward holiness and universal sincere obedience, is as if a man should think, that the forced motion of a Puppet, should make it pass for a living creature; that great promises may pass for performances, and that knowing what we must do, and talking of it, may serve instead of doing what we are taught. Let them lay this seriously to heart, who, when their practices are ungodly and loose, think to salve all by keeping their Church, and saying their Prayers; and all such who make more adoe about the externals in devotion, than about the right ordering of their hearts and lives, whereas all our devotions should tend to better these.

4. If

4. If you would make good the promiſes you have made at the Lords Table, to live a ſtrict and godly life, you will find it of ſingular importance, yea of ſtat neceſſity, *to retain a great watchfulneſs over all your wayes.* Ever keep up a ſenſe of the danger you are in, by reaſon of the frailty of your nature, the deceitfulneſs of your hearts, and the many temptations you are every where expoſed to; And therefore let this care ſecretly run through the whole courſe of your actions to beware of being ſurprized by ſin therein. In all employments, companies and affairs ſtill keep up this watch. And think beforehand, where your danger is greateſt, where you are moſt apt to be overtaken, and there place the ſtrongeſt guard. Set a watch over your eyes, ears, appetites, tongues, hearts and hands, that you be not by them betraid into any miſcarriage. When you find your ſelf endangered by a preſent temptation, then have ſome ſolid reaſon ready at hand to repel it, with ſtore whereof you ſhould alwaies be furniſh'd, with reaſons drawn from God, Chriſt, Heaven or Hell, or from your Sacarmental engagements, as I ſhewed before; and be ſure, have a ſtrong reſolution to check the firſt riſings and beginnings of ſin, before it have gone ſo far, that your judgment is brib'd and blinded by your affections; and have ſpeedy recourſe to the God of all grace, that he would ſend you help from above. *Conſideration*, *Reſolution*, and *Prayer*, are three weapons wherewith the Chriſtian Souldier may do wonders againſt the talleſt ſons of *Anak*, that ſhall aſſault him in his way to *Canaan*. Often take account of your ſelves, and review your behaviour in actions that are paſt; and let one days experience ſtill teach you how to live the next better. But upon the ſenſe of any miſcarriage, let not your guilt drive you farther from God, and put you into unprofitable vexations and horrors, but preſently make haſt to the throne of Grace, get your peace made with God through Chriſt, and renew your watch with more diligence than ever, but alwaies with the moſt humble and abſolute dependance upon divine aſſiſtance. 'Tis too probable, that ſome lazy wretches will here fly out, as *Naaman* in a rage did againſt the Prophet, when he heard he muſt waſh ſeven times in *Jordan* for the cure of his Leproſie, which he thought would have been done with a word ſpeaking, ſo perhaps you'l tell me, *that you had thought Receiving of the Sacrament would ſo have killed your luſts, and cleanſed your hearts, that you need have been at little care about them afterward: and will be ready to ask, what good you get by it, if you muſt take all this pains notwithſtanding.* You ſlothful ſouls, may you not as well ask what good you get by Chriſts death, and the giving of the Spirit? Since notwithſtanding both theſe, you muſt take pains, or

elſe

elſe you are never like to be ſaved. For know, God will have you employ the faculties he has given you, and the work of Grace is to heal your faculties, and enable them for their proper employments. He that made you reaſonable creatures, will make you holy and happy as ſuch, and the help which he affords, is to bring you to diligence, and aſſiſt you therein, and by that means to ſave you. Thus Sacraments are only profitable to the diligent and induſtrious, their uſe being to quicken and ſtrengthen, but they are no refuges for the ſlothful, no encouragements to idleneſs. Never think that God will make ſuch a way to Heaven, that you may walk in it without uſing your legs. 'Tis *you* that muſt *do* the things required, though it be by *Chriſts ſtrengthning you*, for whoſe ſake alſo your frailties are forgiven. Wherefore let me renew my advice, that at all times, and in all things you would be watchful, and maintain an holy jealouſie over thoſe hearts, that have too often ſhown what they have in them. Take this for the greateſt work you have to do in the world, to beware of ſin, and to be careful to pleaſe God, as the Souldiers whole work is to ſerve his General, and the Servants to obey his Maſter, yea more abſolutely than ſo ought a creature to ſtudy his Maſters will, and account this work your own greateſt happineſs. So avoid ſin, and all occaſions and appearances of it, as you would do the plague in a viſited Town; and be as careful to watch all opportunities of doing good both to the ſouls and bodies of others, as men ordinarily are of laying hold on their gain. Often ask your ſelves, wherein God is honoured by you, or others profited, and be aſhamed to live to no better purpoſe than to eat and drink, to ſleep and dreſs your ſelves for work or play. And do not object againſt this conſtant watchfulneſs, that it will take up all your time, and hinder your neceſſary employments: for by uſing it awhile, it will grow even natural to you, and will no more hinder you in your affairs, than it hinders a traveller in his journey, to take heed of running into bogs and ditches. Is it any hard matter to be alwayes careful, leſt you ſhould hurt your bodies? Wherever you are, and whatever you are doing, cannot you keep up this care, and yet follow your buſineſs well enough? Why then can you not take the ſame heed of your ſouls with as little trouble or hindrance?

5. To keep you in this watchfulneſs, and guide you in an exact circumſpect walking, it will be exceeding profitable for you, *at all times to retain upon your minds a very awful ſenſe of the preſence of the moſt Holy God.* Whatever you are about, remember he obſerves you, and ponders all your paths, though you perceive not him. Wherefore alwaies order and behave your ſelves as before him.

Speak

Speak your words as in his hearing; Spend your time, and do all actions as in his sight. You may easier run from under the heavens than out of his eye. And consider he do's not only look on you, but narrowly regard you, and concern himself with you, being highly displeased when you run into sin, and takes delight in your holy conversation. In whatever company you are, be not drawn away by them in a kind of flashy humour, as if the general looseness and jollity did engage you to conform to them, but remember, God is in the midst of you, who never gives you a dispensation to be wicked, and whom it more behoves you to please, than all the world beside, though avoid all ensnaring company as much as possible. Let this keep you from fear or shame, when you are call'd to speak against sin, or for God and holiness; *He's near that will justifie you, you may therefore set your face as a flint*, When you are alone, think not you may sin the more securely: for God is with you, and eyes all your motions as if he had none but you to mind. In your addresses to God, a sense of his nearness will much awaken and affect you, and is one of the best helps against wandring thoughts that you can have. Beware of ever being so fat swallowed up with the noise and hurry of businesses or pleasures, as not to attend to him that stands over you. He that is present every where should be remembred at all times. Read to this purpose, *Psal.* 139. Such a powerful habitual sense of a present God should you work into your minds, that you may walk as before him, even when you do not actually think of him: as a Servant is all day doing that work which his Master would have him, though he may not half that time be thinking of him: So though it be needful that you should often actually think of God, yet above all, see that you never so forget him, as to do that which is displeasing to him; And, to conclude this, in any doubtful action let this be one rule that you go by, not to do that, which whilst you are about, you dare not boldly think of Gods presence.

6. The last thing I shall say to you for the carrying on of an holy life, to which you are bound by the Sacrament, is, *That you be much in serious meditation of the last things, Death, Judgment, and Eternity.* The Frequent and lively thoughts of these will have a mighty influence upon your whole course. To consider your latter end, is both a discovery of, and the way to wisdom. Live every day, as he that knows not whether he hath another day to live. Think often, *What if I had but another month or year to spend in the world, how strictly and holily should I then live that time? How careful should I be of my thoughts, words, and actions? How thrifty of my time? How serious and affectionate in all my approaches*

to God? *How ready and willing to do or receive good? Why let me now live after this exact manner, since it may be I have not so much as a month or year to come; however, very much I am sure I have not, and my preparations, be they never so soon, will not be lost.* Let others funerals put you in mind of yours: and flatter not your selves with the hopes of long life, because you are young and healthful; but see to get your souls in such a condition, that a long life may not be so much the matter of your hopes, nor death the cause of your fears. And remember, you are always going on to the Judgment seat of Christ, where you must have a tryal of ten thousand times greater concernment, than those that use to come before Earthly Princes and Judges; when the case must be decided where you must live for ever, whether in the highest joys, or the sorest torments. Had you not need then now to be getting a good cause: for according to the life you led here in the flesh, will that sentence pass. *The wicked must go into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal.* The God who sees you now, will judge you then by Christ the Redeemer. Think what a life you shall wish you had led, when you come to the end of it, and must be judged for it, and lead such an one now. When the sugred baits of sin are presented, and you have much ado to hold off them, then think what bitterness it will be in the end; compare the honey with the gall, the present delight which is vanisht in a moment, with the sting and pain which endures eternally, and then judge and act like reasonable creatures. But above all, let your thoughts be even steept and swallowed up in the pleasant contemplations of that glory, which shall be revealed in, and bestowed upon all that love the Lord Jesus. Whenever you are ready to faint and give out, remember the joy that is set before you, and let that remembrance cheer and revive you. Consider what that goodness is, which God hath laid up in himself for them that fear him, 'till you find your love enflamed towards him; and let love put you upon more frequent thoughts, and earnest longings after him. Only see to fill up all your time with suitable actions, and then let it even please you to see your days post away so fast. Alwaies keep it on your thoughts, that you are in a journey to a glorious Kingdom, and be often saying, now I am one day, or month, or year nearer than I was before. Stretch out thy self with a longing look towards thy Fathers house, shortly I shall be in the arms of my dear Saviour, and shall be joyning with Saints and Angels in the triumphant praises of Jehovah and the Lamb. And remember this happiness consists chiefly in being made perfectly holy, and therefore here must that grace be sown and grow up, that shall then be ripened into glory.

And

And the more holy you are, the nearer to Heaven will you go whilſt you ſtay on earth, and the meeter for it will you be when you are taken off from the earth. Ever keep up ſuch a ſenſe of the excellency of this future bleſſedneſs, as may blaſt all other things in your eſteem, and deaden the temptations that are taken from pleaſures, riches and honours. Oh think how perfectly provided for muſt he needs be, who ſhall have God for his portion! How many are they that would loſe the leaſt hope of this happineſs for the whole world? And they that look for ſuch great things, what manner of perſons ought they to be in all holy converſation and godlineſs! Oh let nothing weary you, or turn you out of the way. Hold out awhile longer, and you ſhall be plac'd out of the reach of all temptations for ever. Faſten upon nothing on this ſide heaven with any great delight or long ſtay: But ſtill tell your ſelves, it's time enough to be happy when God ſhall take you to himſelf, ſo he will but here vouchſafe you that converſe with him, whereof we in this ſtate are capable. Let every thing you meet with be as a ſtep toward mount Sion, and raiſe you nearer to heaven, and make you more deſirous of it. And when you have been thus meditating and preparing, waiting and deſiring a while, you ſhall aſſuredly find, that your labour was not in vain. Wherefore let ſuch conſiderations as theſe make you ſteadfaſt, unmovable, alwaies abounding in your Lords work, 'till at length you ſhall be tranſlated into his joy.

And thus I have diſpatcht thoſe directions I promiſed, for the promoting of holineſs, which was the laſt thing I had to do. It now remains, that we ſet our ſelves reſolvedly, and ſincerely to the practiſe of what God hath revealed to be our duty; which if we do, we need not doubt of his aſſiſtance and bleſſing; but upon our perſeverance in well-doing, to which we have obliged our ſelves, may, through our Meditatour, confidently expect his gracious acceptance, and his glorious Crown.

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jeſus, that great Shepherd of his ſheep by the blood of the everlaſting Covenant; make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleaſing in his ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt, to whom be glory for ever, and ever. *Amen.* Heb. 13. 20, 21.

FINIS.